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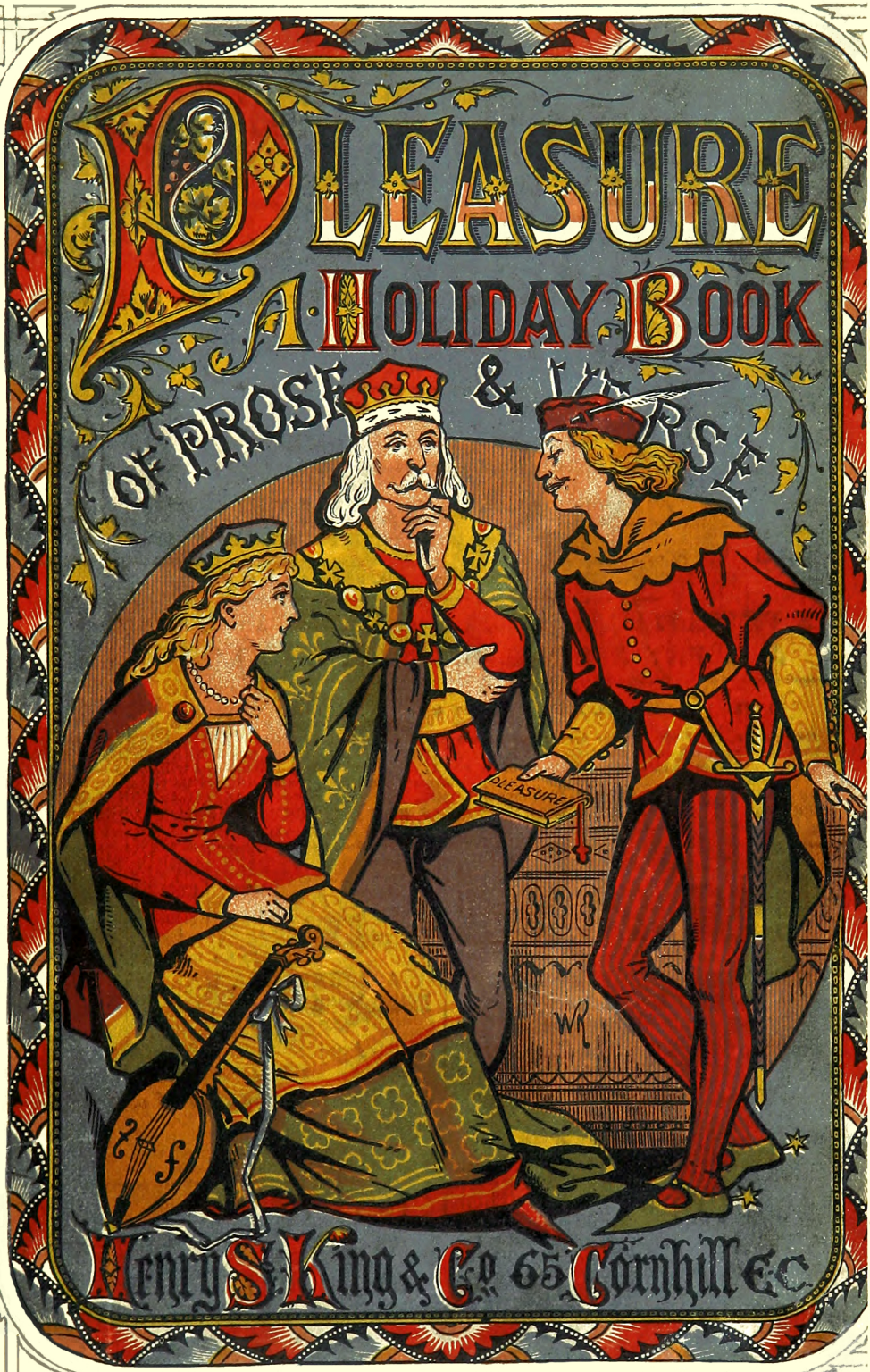

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'Let us from point to point this story know,
To make the even Truth in PLEASURE flow.'

All's Well that Ends Well,
Act v. Sc. iii.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
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BRITISH MUSEUM

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PLEASURE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE MISERABLE FAMILY.

STRANGER, they were *so*. About as discontented, brain-troubled, worried, perturbed, angry, cynical, dissatisfied, and ill-natured a family, as you could set eyes on. It was a well-to-do family, too; with money, perhaps too much money. But this family had a way of looking at things which really was very unpleasant.

And life depends so much upon how we look at it! It is like shot silk; one man sees that it is a sombre yellow brown, another from an opposite side beholds a dirty red, a third recognises a sun-burst, as it were, of glorious purple.

It was the dirty reds and the yellow browns that the Miserable Family constantly beheld.

Old Mr. Verables Dax—the country people would persist in calling him Venerable Dax, and this he was far from being—had his 'place' in Hertfordshire; a dull stone house, a dull heavy park round it, with dull trees and, too often, dull skies. Mr. Dax had also his town house in Harley Street, whence the aristocracy had long flown; a dull smoky house, eminently respectable, but very dingy, gloomy, large, and cheerless. It was worse to go into the front dining-room of the Daxes than to enter a dentist's waiting-room. It simply chilled you.

On the black marble mantel-shelf stood three bronzes and two ebonised vases. The centre bronze was a writhing Laöcoon supported by his two struggling and contorted sons; the side-pendants were

formed by two of the unhappy children of Niobe, appealing in vain for shelter against the darts of the implacable sun-god Phœbus Apollo. Mr. Dawkins Dax, a University man, called the god *Phoibos*; a classical man, sir, was Dawkins.

These writhing and contorted images with their faces of pain having been contemplated, the visitor might turn to the cheerful and historical pictures of the death, by starvation, of Ugolino, the execution of Lady Jane Grey by Mortimer, a saint being flayed alive after Salvator, the martyrdom of St. Sebastian by a gloomy and gummy Spanish master, and a fine dark impression of the Nightmare by that rare scholar and genius the Academician Fuseli.

The very chairs were straight-backed and uncomfortable, but well made and substantial. Outside in the hall were some seats of black mahogany on which were the family arms, a chevron *arg.* on a field *sable* between three Lochaber axe-heads; crest, dexter arm habited sable, with an axe *ppr.* Motto (selected by Mr. Verables' father as a gloomy pun) *Tundo non Rogo*, 'I strike, I do not *axe!*' It is to be observed that the first Latin verb means to pummel, beat, crush, and thoroughly smash and serve out one's enemy. The motto pleased both Verables and Dawkins, and the family adhered to it. It was the only joke ever known in the family.

Opposite the three heavy windows of the dining-room, and reflecting the dark curtains and the bronzes on the mantel-shelf, while it presented a cheerful miniature of the sombre pictures, hung a fine mirror, convex, circular, in a black and gold frame, over which an eagle was extending its wings, and holding in its beak three or four chains, as if it were ready to pounce down and bind any cheerful person who wandered in, or was ready to imprison the sombre butler who stood by the black marble slab upheld by two chained slaves in bronze, who strained and showed their muscles with elaborate discomfort.

In the fireplace a large fire painfully built up of coke smouldered and did its best to throw out what heat it could. For Verables Dax, if rich, was penurious, and objected to a cheerful blaze.

In this lively salon the family were assembled one wintry night not far from Christmas, after a heavy dinner of beef and some old fiery port, black, but not subdued by age.

The family was drawn round the fire. It was an old family, in

more senses than one. It came originally, it was said, from Aix, and should properly have been spelt *De* Aix or D'Aix, but the present orthography suited those who bore the name. Mrs. Dax, *née* Miss Dawkins, was of an equally ancient Northumbrian line, and had an aquiline nose, which she had transmitted, with her proud and foolish face, to her daughter Penelope Dax and her son Dawkins. Dawkins was a barrister, engaged in the humanising and cheerful practice of the Old Bailey, and his conversation was of that light and interesting kind which reports of criminal trials furnish; and this, like most gentlemen of his cloth, he good-naturedly—and t'was the only trait of that kind he exhibited—entertained his family with.

Penelope Dax was a somewhat refrigerating spinster. As it was known that she would be well dowered, we must do the young men who sometimes saw her, the justice to say that they courageously offered to share the troubles and temptations of her fortune with her; but she had so smart and biting a tongue, that such gallant young knights had retired discomfited. Mrs. Dax and Penelope occupied chairs on one side of the fire, the matron a fauteil of ancient make opposite her husband; and Penelope, as well as her brother Dawkins, two of the roomy and excellent old straight-backed mahogany dining chairs.

Dawkins was not in a good humour. Dinner at half-past seven had passed almost silently. Mrs. Dax had scolded the butler, and had sent some biting message to the cook. Penelope was reading a nice little hard-hearted political tract, proving that the poor, *en masse*, were very bad indeed, and that the country was fast going to perdition.

'Did you get that man off, Dawkins?' croaked old Verables Dax, alluding to a tender-hearted person who had been that day tried for beating his wife to death.

'No,' growled his son; 'a soft-headed judge and soft-hearted jury would not see that the man was only correcting her.'

'They need correction, the poorer classes; they are improvident, careless, and given to enjoyment. Why did the wretched creature marry?'

'Why indeed,' said Mrs. Dax.

'He *was* somewhat violent,' said Dawkins—'when provoked. And the weapon such as this was ready to his hand.'

He took up the poker.

'She should have put it out of his way,' said Penelope. 'What right have poor persons with luxuries?

'They can't eat them,' said old Dax, with a grin. 'Hallo, what are you doing? Don't do that.'

Dawkins had absolutely poked the fire. 'I shan't make it blaze,' he said.

'No, I hope you won't. I hate bright light. We can see enough of each other as it is.'

'Well! what we do see isn't very pleasant,' said the son, in a tiff.

'Speak for yourself, D.,' said Penelope. 'You have not taken away all the beauty of the family.'

'If I left any, you didn't pick it up, Pen,' returned the barrister with a grin which brought unpleasant lines on his pale face.

'I daresay you're as good as the rest of the world, children,' interjected Mrs. Dax.

'Hang the World,' cried Dawkins.

'I wish I were the judge, I'd condemn them all,' growled the father. What good did I ever get out it?'

'Or any of us,' said Penelope.

'Rogues and cheats,' said the father.

'Frivolous persons and fools,' added the mother.

'Scamps and hussies,' said the sister.

'Black-legs and fortune-hunters,' threw in the brother. 'There! that's the World. When they come to see you they merely come to eat your dinner, or to see what they can get out of you.'

'There's precious few come to get anything out of *me*,' cried Verables.

'If the men propose, they only do so for your money. I could see through them. They did not care for me.'

Dawkins looked as if he should have liked to have said, 'I don't wonder at that;' but his eye was arrested by something. The candles, burning in two ancient candlesticks, and giving by no means too brilliant a light, burned dimmer and dimmer; the room grew darker and darker.

'There's those confounded candle-makers,' he cried; 'they've been adulterating the wax or spermaceti. A pretty world! that's what's the matter.'

'No it is not,' said a silvery Voice, full of gaiety. The darkness is in yourselves.'

'In me! In me! In me! In me!' cried the four voices one after the other. 'We are not going blind.'

'No, you're blind enough already,' said the little voice, tremulous this time with anger. 'You are a miserable family, you are.'

'We are,' croaked the four voices, as the candles grew dimmer and their faint hearts beat more faintly.

'You want lighting up. Look at me!' The voice seemed to come from the back of the old mirror; and as Verables wheeled round his chair to face it, and therefore gazed eagerly at it, the convex surface grew bright, and a beautiful female figure stood before it, clothed in white samite, wondrous firm, majestic, and looking up to Heaven with a constant gaze.

'Do you know her?' said the little silver Voice. 'I do; she is always with me; but many in this world never even know of her presence, her reality. Do you?'

'No,' returned the four dull voices, as if four death-bells had chimed at the same time.

'She visits such scenes as these. Her name is Faith.'

The mirror flashed and changed. It exhibited a poor scene now —a little cottage, but so bright and clean; a pretty young wife, worn with work, but very cheerful; a young husband, some mechanic of a higher grade, for his face was full of sense and culture; and three rosy children, who with father and mother knelt in prayer while the figure seemed to pass, with loving slowness, above them as it shed down peace and love.

While the Miserable Family gazed, and Penelope, who never went even to see a magic-lantern, cried 'How beautiful!' the vision faded, and another form was there. Again it was a woman, eager, young, brave and resolute in her bearing, with dark clouds around her, looking forward to a brighter gleam.

'You know her?' cried the tiny silvery voice; 'you must know her, of course.'

'No-o-o!' but rather more doubtingly came the chorus of voices, while the rest of the room grew darker and more gloomy. The mirror changed too. The same little room they saw before. The children grown up, two boys and a young woman, working people,

but well-to-do, and well clothed. The father gray-headed and somewhat worn; the mother seated in an easy chair, lying backwards and holding her husband's hand, while her children bent over her.

'She is dying,' whispered Penelope, as the others looked towards the glass.

'Yes,' said the silvery Voice firmly, and without melancholy; 'with those who love her about her, and above her Faith and Hope.'

There were two figures now moving across the bright face of the mirror, and lighting up the little room with a radiance it never wore before. Eagerly in the picture on its surface, the children pressed to kiss her; more eagerly, more fondly, the man bent down looking worlds of brave love and comfort into his wife's eyes, as the vision faded out.

Penelope Dax and Mrs. Dax, *née* Dawkins, felt their eyes dim with an unaccustomed moisture, when the sweet little Voice said, 'there's another stranger yet. She's the best of the three; and the greatest stranger here,' she added, with severity.

This was a matronly figure, young with a perpetual youth, fond with a fondness more wide than a mother's; noble with the true nobility of all-embracing love; pure and upright as the bright beams which dart from star to star. The room itself grew bright with the effulgence of Charity, and the dim eyes of the Miserable Family twinkled and felt dazed, as eyes are blinded and dazzled when coming from darkness into light.

'This,' said the silver voice, severely, 'is Charity. Miserable, indeed, are those that do not know her.'

A softer look beamed from the eyes of the figure as she bent forwards towards the Dax family, and she seemed pleadingly to express, in some mysterious way, that there was no household from which she was banished wholly. Mr. Verables Dax sank back in his chair, Dawkins gave an uneasy cough, and mother and daughter leaned more closely to each other.

'And of these Blessed Three, you people—I will *not* call you good people said the Voice quite angrily—don't know a blessed one! I am ashamed of you! Just look.'

The Magical Mirror brightened again with the soft effulgence of the full bright harvest-moon, and on its surface was depicted the gloomy old room in Harley Street, with the ancient Daxes amid their

ancient worldy belongings crouching and whispering; while above them—yes, even above *them*—floated the three fair Graces which sweeten and freshen the world. But a cloud seemed to hover above their heads, and the radiance celestial did not fall upon them. How dull and contemptible was this scene compared with the last; there was the triumph after the trial; here was the trial borne as a crouching slave bears the blows he dare not return. But Charity looked down with infinite love, even into that dull home. As the figures passed away, Penelope, stretching her hands, cried, 'Do not leave us, sweet Charity; stay with us to cheer our dull hearts!'

She never refuses a cry like that. 'I can see you mean it,' said the little figure; I can show you other pictures.'

'You can?' cried Dawkins, in his examination voice; 'and pray who are you?'

'Oh I'll tell you; I'm a greater stranger than the Blessed Three. But just let me show you these pretty pictures;' and then the mirror flashed in a twinkling—as if the silver-voiced showman had turned over a number of gay pictures one after the other—the brightest scenes.

'There, that's the very best of all; it's akin to Charity—it's Love. Love, that makes all hearts glad, the great Heart-Wizard, the leveller of rank, the scorner of the world; love, that makes a peasant a hero, and a hero a king! Love, that plagues women's hearts and maddens men's brains; why, even lawyers have fallen in love!'

'The deuce?' cried Dawkins.

'Don't say that again, or I shall go!' There, that is Fidelity, that is Courtesy; here are Content, and Humour and Happiness; here is buxom Good-nature; here are Heroism, Firmness, Bravery, Good Sense, and Scorn o' the World! He's a brave fellow; he is always having battles with Mrs. Grundy. Look how they chase away these your friends.'

Flash, flash went the mirror. Good sense and Good-nature did wonderful battle; they routed Avarice, Meanness, Greediness of this world's good, Envy and Hatred of other people. They had a dreadful tussle with one fellow, gaunt, strong, and armed at all points. Good-nature knocked him down, Good Sense flung him out of doors; but he was in at the window again, and had his first opponent soon on his knees, and his sharp sword would have cut down the second, but that he had a very finely-tempered helmet on, which shivered

his sword. Pride thereon took a formidable club—a very ugly spiky weapon—and laid about him till the two, rushing in upon him when he was well nigh out of breath, took away his club, and belaboured him till he sank down weak and dying, whereon Good Sense flung him out of window, and shut the door upon his very ghost.

'Bravo! Bravo!' cried Dawkins, who was too much of an Englishman not to like a good fight!

'It went very near with them,' said the silver Voice; 'I was just going in to help them!'

'You!' sneered old Dax. 'Why, from your voice you're but a hop-o'-my-thumb!'

'Yes, I'm very little with some people, very little indeed. When I'm not fed I pine and grow smaller; in some houses I can't exist. I never entered yours before. But in some I grow lusty and strong.'

'Let us look at you.'

'Not just yet,' said the Voice.

'Then leave your card or tell us your name, do, good sir,' said Mrs. Dax.

'Well then, I'm Pleasure! Honest Pleasure, remember. There are others of the family, or who assume our name, not always to be welcomed.'

'Well, you'll stop now; you are a stranger.'

'Just so! I thought I was. *Now* I cannot stop. I am off to country-houses, Christmas parties, boxes of theatres where bright-eyed children wonder and shout with joy at glittering Harlequin and merry Clown.'

'Oh, do stop! do stop!' chorussed the ancient Dax family.

'Can't! that's poz! It's an old exclamation, but I am an old resident in merry England, which by the way, you folks and such as you are not improving.'

'We will improve ourselves; we will indeed.'

'That's what I called for. Good people, it is so easy to grow wiser and better, if you do but try.'

'Oh, pray do stop!'

'No; impossible just now; but here's one of my cards. And as the little Sprite took a harlequin's jump through the old mirror, a gaily-

covered packet fell upon the dark and ancient mahogany dining-room table.

'It's mine!' cried old Dax, tumbling out of his chair, and nearly upsetting his wife as he clutched something on the table.

'Verables,' cried his wife, 'you've wakened me out of such a pleasant dream.'

'You've broken my shin, Penelope,' said Dawkins, 'as well as my sleep.'

'I've bumped my nose on your forehead, all through mother's pushing me. Oh, why did it go?'

'It?—What?'

'The dream, the beautiful dream!'

''Tisn't a dream, my dears. I've got it here,' cried old Verables.

'Oh my, you dear old man,' said Mrs. Dax, embracing him.

'Sorry I broke your nose, Penny, let's kiss it,' said Dawkins.

'Kiss again, dear D.' said Penelope, 'and welcome! Why, how nice it is!'

'Not a word of grumbling. Ring the bell, Dawkins my boy; let's have some coal up this time, and four wax candles. We won't be so dull again. And here, Dax junior, you sir, you can shout to a Chief Justice; read us something.'

'What shall I read, sir?'

'Oh, you'll be sure to find something to amuse you in this budget left us by our little friend.'

'We all saw him,' cried the party, delighted.

'What an extraordinary dream to be dreamt by four people at the same time!' said old Verables, musing.

'Go on, father, left by whom?'

'By our holiday friend, PLEASURE.'

HAIN FRISWELL.

SLEEP BY THE SEA.

FRIENDS, when you think I am like to die,
  Carry me where the sea is roaring:
There on my last bed let me lie,
  And list to the long wave landward pouring—
    Beating, beating,
    And ever repeating
  The cry it cried, when it first was hurled,
    With a myriad shocks
    On the barrier-rocks
  In the very birthday of the world.

And—if I could die within sound of the sea—
  The voices of all who e'er loved and knew me,
To mingle with hers, who is dearest to me,
  Its murmur would bring—to sleep to woo me—
    Throbbing, throbbing,
    And plaintively sobbing
  As erst it sighed when the night and morn
    Had faded away
    Of the first fair day,
  When this beautiful world of ours was born.

Oh, there, in a churchyard, high on a cliff,
  In how deep a sleep, from the vain endeavour
Of longing and life, I could rest me—if
  The sea its wild lullaby sang for ever,
    Beating, beating,
    And still repeating
  The cry it cried, when it first was hurled
    With a myriad shocks
    On the barrier-rocks
  In the very birthday of the world.

TOM HOOD

THE NEW PASS.

By the Author of 'Barbara's History' &c. &c.

The circumstances I am about to relate happened just four autumns ago, when I was travelling in Switzerland with my old school and college friend, Egerton Wolfe.

Before going further, however, I wish to observe that this is no dressed-up narrative. I am a plain, prosaic man; by name Francis Legrice—by profession a barrister—and I think it would be difficult to find many persons less given to look upon life from a romantic or imaginative point of view. By my enemies, and sometimes, perhaps, by my friends, I am supposed to push my habit of incredulity to the verge of universal scepticism; and indeed I admit that I believe in very little that I do not hear and see for myself. But for these things that I am going to relate, I can vouch; and in so far as mine is a personal narrative, I am responsible for its truth. What I saw, I saw with my own eyes in the broad daylight. I offer nothing, therefore, in the shape of a story; but simply a plain statement of facts, as they happened to myself.

I was travelling, then, in Switzerland with Egerton Wolfe. It was not our first joint long-vacation tour by a good many, but it promised to be our last; for Wolfe was engaged to be married the following spring to a very beautiful and charming girl, the daughter of a north-country baronet.

He was a handsome fellow, tall, graceful, dark-haired, dark-eyed; a poet, a dreamer, an artist—as thoroughly unlike myself, in short, as one man having arms, legs, and a head, can be unlike another. And yet we suited each other capitally, and were the fastest friends and best travelling companions in the world.

We had begun our holiday on this occasion with a week's idleness at a place which I will call Oberbrunn—a delightful place, wholly

Swiss, consisting of one huge wooden building, half water-cure establishment, half hotel; two smaller buildings called Dépendances; a tiny church with a bulbous steeple painted green; and a handful of village—all perched together on a breezy mountain-plateau, some three thousand feet above the lake and valley. Here, far from the haunts of the British tourist and the Alpine Club man, we read, smoked, climbed, rose with the dawn, rubbed up our rusty German, and got ourselves into training for the knapsackwork to follow.

At length, our week being up, we started—rather later on the whole than was prudent, for we had a thirty-miles' walk before us, and the sun was already high.

It was a glorious morning, however; the sky flooded with light, and a cool breeze blowing. I see the bright scene now, just as it lay before us when we came down the hotel steps and found our guide waiting for us outside. There were the water-drinkers gathered round the fountain on the lawn; the usual crowd of itinerant vendors of stag-horn ornaments and carved toys in wood and ivory squatted in a semi-circle about the door; some half-dozen barefooted little mountain children running to and fro with wild raspberries for sale; the valley so far below, dotted with hamlets, and traversed by a winding stream, like a thread of flashing silver; the black pine-wood, half-way down the slope; the frosted peaks glittering on the horizon.

'Bon voyage!' said our good host, Dr. Steigl, with a last hearty shake of the hand.

'Bon voyage!' echoed the waiters and miscellaneous hangers-on.

Some three or four of the water-drinkers at the fountain raised their hats—the ragged children pursued us with their wild fruits as far as the gate—and so we departed.

For some distance our path lay along the mountain side, through pine woods and by cultivated slopes where the Indian corn was ripening to gold, and the late hay harvest was waiting for the mower. Then the path wound gradually downwards—for the valley lay between us and the pass we had laid out for our day's work—and then, through a succession of soft green slopes and ruddy apple-orchards, we came to a blue lake fringed with rushes, where we hired a boat with a striped awning, like the boats on Lago Maggiore, and were rowed across by a boatman who rested on his oars and sang a *jödel*-song when we were half way across.

Being landed on the opposite bank, we found our road at once begin to trend upwards; and here, as the guide informed us, the ascent of the Höhenhorn might be said to begin.

'This, however, meine Herren,' said he, 'is only part of the old pass. It is ill-kept; for none but country folks and travellers from Oberbrunn come this way now. But we shall strike the New Pass higher up. A grand road, meine Herren—as fine a road as the Simplon, and good for carriages all the way. It has only been open since the spring.'

'The old pass is good enough for me, anyhow!' said Egerton, crowding a handful of wild forget-me-nots, under the ribbon of his hat. 'It's like a stray fragment of Arcadia.'

And in truth it was wonderfully lovely and secluded—a mere rugged path winding steeply upwards in a soft green shade, among large forest trees and moss-grown rocks covered with patches of velvety lichen. A little streamlet ran singing beside it all the way—now gurgling deep in ferns and grasses; now feeding a rude trough made of a hollow trunk; now crossing our road like a broken flash of sunlight; now breaking away in a tiny fall and foaming out of sight, only to re-appear a few steps further on. Then overhead, through the close roof of leaves, we saw patches of blue sky and golden shafts of sunshine, and small brown squirrels leaping from bough to bough; and in the deep rich grass on either hand, thick ferns, and red and golden mosses, and blue campanulas, and now and then a little wild strawberry, ruby red. By-and-by, when we had been following this path for nearly an hour, we came upon a patch of clearing, in the midst of which stood a rough upright monolith, antique, weather-stained, covered with rude carvings like a Runic monument—the primitive boundary-stone between the Cantons of Uri and Unterwalden.

'Let us rest here!' cries Egerton, flinging himself at full length on the grass. '*Eheu fugaces!*—and the hours are shorter than the years. Why not enjoy them?'

But the guide, whose name is Peter Kauffmann, interposes after the manner of guides in general, and will by no means let us have our own way. There is a mountain inn, he urges, now only five minutes distant—'an excellent little inn, where they sell good red wine.' So we yield to fate and Peter Kauffmann and pursue our

upward way, coming presently, as he promised and predicted, upon a bright open space and a brown châlet on a shelf of plateau overhanging a giddy precipice. Here, sitting under a vine-covered trellis built out on the very brink of the cliff, we find three mountaineers discussing a flask of the good red wine aforesaid.

In this picturesque eyrie we made our mid-day halt. A smiling mädchen brought us coffee, brown bread, and goats-milk cheese; while our guide, pulling out a huge lump of the driest *schwartzes brod* from his wallet, fraternised with the mountaineers over a half-flask of his favourite vintage.

The men chattered merrily in their half-intelligible patois. We sat silent, looking down into the deep misty valley and across to the great amethyst mountains uplifted on giant walls of perpendicular cliff, streaked here and there with faint blue threads of slender waterfalls.

'There must surely be moments,' said Egerton Wolfe after awhile, 'when even such men as you, Frank—men of the world, and lovers of it—feel within them some stirrings of the primitive Adam; some vague longing for that idyllic life of the woods and fields that we dreamers are still, in our inmost souls, insane enough to sigh after as the highest good.'

'You mean, don't I sometimes wish to be a Swiss peasant-farmer, with sabôts; a goitre; a wife without form as regards her person, and void as regards her head; and a *cretin* grandfather a hundred and three years old? Why, no. I prefer myself as I am.'

My friend smiled, and shook his head.

'Why take it for granted,' said he, 'that no man can cultivate his brains and his paternal acres at the same time? Horace, with none of the adjuncts you name, loved a country life, and turned it to immortal poetry.'

'The world has gone round once or twice since then, my dear fellow,' I replied, philosophically. 'The best poetry comes out of cities now-a-days.'

'And the worst. Do you see those avalanches over yonder?'

Following the direction of his eyes, I saw something like a tiny puff of white smoke glide over the shoulder of a huge mountain on the opposite side of the valley. It was followed by another and another. We could neither see whence they came nor whither they

went. We were too far away to hear the sullen thunder of their fall. Silently they flashed into sight, and as silently they vanished.

Wolfe sighed heavily.

'Poor Lawrence!' said he. 'Switzerland was his dream. He longed for the Alps as ardently as other men long for money or power.'

Lawrence was a younger brother of his, whom I had never seen —a lad of great promise, whose health had broken down at Addiscombe some ten or twelve years before, and who had soon after died of rapid consumption at Torquay.

'And he never had that longing gratified, had he?'

'Ah, no—he was never out of England. They prescribe bracing climates now, I am told, for lung disease; but not so then. Poor dear fellow! I sometimes fancy he might have lived, if only he had had his heart's desire.'

'I would not let such a painful thought enter my head, if I were you,' said I, hastily.

'But I can't help it! My mind has been running on poor Lawrence all the morning; and, somehow, the grander the scenery gets, the more I keep thinking how he would have exulted in it. Do you remember those lines by Coleridge, written in the Valley of Chamouni? He knew them by heart. 'Twas the sight of yonder avalanches that reminded me. . . . Well! I will try not to think of these things. Let us change the subject.'

Just at this moment, the landlord of the châlet came out—a bright eyed voluble young mountaineer about five or six-and-twenty, with a sprig of Edelweiss in his hat.

'Good day, meine Herren,' he said, including all alike in his salute, but addressing himself especially to Wolfe and myself. 'Fine weather for travelling—fine weather for the grapes. These Herren are going on by the New Pass? Ach, Herr Gott! a grand work! a wonderful work!—and all begun and completed in less than three years. These Herren see it to-day for the first time? Good. They have probably been over the Tête Noir? No! Over the Splugen? Good—good. If these Herren have been over the Splugen, they can form an idea of the New Pass. The New Pass is very like the Splugen. It has a gallery tunneled in the solid rock, just like the gallery on the Via Mala, with this difference that the gallery in the New Pass is much

longer, and lighted by loop-holes at regular intervals. These Herren will please to observe the view looking both up and down the pass, before entering the mouth of the tunnel—there is not a finer view in all Switzerland.'

'It must be a great advantage to the people hereabouts, having so good a road carried from valley to valley,' said I, smiling at his enthusiasm.

'Oh, it is a fine thing for us, mein Herr!' he replied. 'And a fine thing for all this part of the Canton. It will bring visitors—floods of visitors! By the way, these Herren must not omit to look out for the waterfall above the gallery. Holy St. Nicholas! the way in which that waterfall has been arranged!'

'Arranged!' echoed Wolfe, who was as much amused as myself. '*Diavolo!* Do you arrange the waterfalls in your country?'

'It was the Herr Becker,' said the landlord, unconscious of banter; 'the eminent engineer who planned the New Pass. The waterfall, you see, meine Herren, could not be suffered to follow its old course down the face of the rock through which the gallery is tunnelled, or it would have flowed in at the loopholes and flooded the road. What, therefore, did the Herr Becker do?'

'Turned the course of the fall, and brought it down a hundred yards further on,' said I, somewhat impatiently.

'Not so, mein Herr—not so! The Herr Becker attempts nothing so expensive. He permits the fall to keep its old couloir and come down its old way—but instead of letting it wash the outside of the gallery, he pierces the rock in another direction—vertically—behind the tunnel; constructs an artificial shoot, or conduit in the heart of the rock; and brings the fall out *below* the gallery, just where the cliff overhangs the valley. Now what do the English Herren say to that?'

'That it must certainly be a clever piece of engineering,' replied Wolfe.

'And that, having rested long enough, we will push on and see it,' added I, glad to cut short the thread of our host's native eloquence.

So we paid our reckoning, took a last look at the view, and, plunging back into the woods, went on our way refreshed.

The path still continued to ascend, till we suddenly came upon a burst of daylight and found ourselves on a magnificent high road

some thirty feet feet in breadth, with the forest and the telegraph wires on the one hand, and the precipice on the other. Massive granite posts at close intervals protected the edge of the road; and the cantonniers were still at work here and there, breaking and laying fresh stones, and clearing débris. We did not need to be informed that this was the New Pass.

Always ascending, we continued now to follow the road, which at every turn commanded finer and finer views across the valley. Then by degrees the forest dwindled, and was at last left far below; and the giddy precipices to our left grew steeper; and the mountain slopes above became more and more barren; till the last Alp-roses vanished, and there remained only a carpet of brown and tan moss scattered over here and there with great boulders—some freshly broken away from the heights above—others thickly coated with lichen, as if they might have been lying there for centuries. We seemed here to have reached the highest point of the New Pass, for our road continued at this barren level for several miles. An immense panorama of peaks, snow-fields and glaciers, lay outstretched before us to the left, with an unfathomable gulf of misty valley between. The hot air simmered in the sun. The heat and silence were intense. Once, and once only, we came upon a party of travellers. They were three in number, lying at full length in the shade of a huge fragment of fallen rock, their heads comfortably pillowed on their knapsacks, and all fast asleep.

And now the grey rock began to crop out in larger masses close beside our path, encroaching nearer and nearer, till at last the splintered cliffs towered straight above our heads, and the road became a mere broad shelf along the face of the precipice. Presently, on turning a sharp angle of rock, we saw before us a vista of road, cliff, and valley—the road now perceptibly on the decline, and vanishing about a mile ahead into the mouth of a small cavernous opening (no bigger, as it seemed from that distance, than a good-sized rabbit-hole) pierced through a huge projecting spur, or buttress, of the mountain.

'Behold the famous gallery!' said I. 'Mine host was right—it *is* something like the Splugen, barring the much greater altitude of the road and the still greater width of the valley. But where is the waterfall?'

'Well, it's not much of a waterfall,' said Wolfe. 'I can just see it—a tiny thread of mist wavering down the cliff a long way on, beyond the mouth of the tunnel.'

'Aye; I see it now—a sort of inferior Staubbach. Heavens! what power the sun has up here! At what time did Kauffmann say we should get to Schwartzenfelden?'

'Not before seven, at the earliest—and it is now nearly four.'

'Humph! three hours more—say three and a half. Well, that will be a pretty good first day's pedestrianising, heat and all considered!'

Here the conversation dropped, and we plodded on again in silence, Meanwhile the sun blazed in the heavens, and the light, struck back from white rock and whiter road, was almost blinding. And still the hot air danced and simmered before us; and a windless stillness, as of death, lay upon all the scene.

Suddenly, quite suddenly—as if he had started out of the rock—I saw a man coming towards us with rapid and eager gesticulations. He seemed to be waving us back; but I was so startled for the moment by the unexplained way in which he made his appearance, that I scarcely took in the meaning of his gestures.

'How odd!' I exclaimed, coming to a halt. 'How did he get there?'

'How did who get there?' said Wolfe.

'Why, that fellow yonder. Did you see where he came from?'

'What fellow, my dear boy? I see no one but ourselves.'

And he stared vaguely round, while all the time the man between us and the gallery was waving his right arm above his head, and running on to meet us.

'Good heavens! Egerton,' I said impatiently, 'where are your eyes? Here—straight before us—not a quarter of a mile off—making signs as hard as he can. Perhaps we had better wait till he comes up.'

My friend drew his race-glass from its case, adjusted it carefully, and took a long, steady look down the road. Seeing him do this, the man stood still; but kept his right hand up all the same.

'You see him now, surely?' said I.

'*No.*'

I turned and looked him in the face. I could not believe my ears.

'Upon my honour, Frank,' he said earnestly, 'I see only the empty road, and the mouth of the tunnel beyond. Here, Kauffmann!'

Kauffmann, who was standing close by, stepped up and touched his cap.

'Look down the road,' said Wolfe.

The guide shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked.

'What do you see?'

'I see the entrance to the gallery, mein Herr.'

'Nothing else?'

'Nothing else, mein Herr.'

And still the man stood there in the road—even came a step or two nearer! Was I mad?

'You still think you see some one yonder?' said Egerton, looking at me very seriously.

'I *know* that I do.'

He handed me his race-glass.

'Look through that,' he said, 'and tell me if you still see him.'

'I see him more plainly than before.'

'What is he like?'

'Very tall—very slender—fair—quite young—not more, I should say, than fifteen or sixteen—evidently an Englishman.'

'How is he dressed?'

'In a grey suit—his collar open, and his throat bare. Wears a Scotch cap with a silver badge in it. He takes his cap off, and waves it!—he has a whitish scar on his right temple. I can see the motion of his lips—he seems to say "Go back! go back!" Look for yourself—you *must* see him!'

I turned to give him the glass, but he pushed it away.

'No, no,' he said, hoarsely. 'It's of no use. Go on looking. . . . What more, for God's sake?'

I looked again—the glass all but dropped from my hand.

'Gracious heavens!' I exclaimed breathlessly, 'he is gone!'

'Gone!'

Aye, gone. Gone as suddenly as he came—gone as though he had never been! I could not believe it. I rubbed my eyes. rubbed the glass on my sleeve. I looked, and looked again; and still, though I looked, I doubted.

At this moment, with a wild, unearthly cry, and a strange sound as

of some heavy projectile cleaving the stagnant air, an eagle plunged past us upon mighty wings, and swooped down into the valley.

'Ein adler! ein adler!' shouted the guide, flinging up his cap and running to the brink of the precipice.

Wolfe laid his hand upon my arm, and drew a deep breath.

'Legrice,' he said very calmly, but with a white, awe-struck look in his face, 'you described my brother Lawrence—age, height, dress, everything; even to the Scotch cap he always wore, and the silver badge my uncle Horace gave him on his birthday. He got that scar in a cricket-match at Harrowgate.'

'Your brother Lawrence?' I faltered.

'Why you should be the one permitted to see him is strange,' he went on, speaking more to himself than to me. 'Very strange! I wish . . . but there! perhaps I should not have believed my own eyes. I *must* believe yours.'

'I will never believe that my eyes saw your brother Lawrence,' I said resolutely.

'We must turn back, of course,' he went on, taking no notice of my answer. 'Look here, Kauffmann; can we get to Schwartzenfelden to-night by the old pass, if we turn back at once?'

'Turn back!' I interrupted. 'My dear Egerton, you are not serious?'

'I was never more serious in my life,' he said, gravely.

'If these Herren wish to take the old pass,' said the astonished guide, 'we cannot possibly get to Schwartzenfelden before midnight. We have already come seven miles out of the way, and the old pass is twelve miles farther round.'

'Twelve and fourteen are twenty-six,' said I. 'We cannot add twenty-six miles to our original thirty. It is out of the question.'

'These Herren can sleep at the châlet where we halted,' suggested the guide.

'True—I had not thought of that,' said Wolfe. 'We can sleep at the châlet, and go on as soon as it is day.'

'Turn back, sleep at the châlet, go on in the morning, and lose full half a day, with one of the finest passes in Switzerland before us, and our journey two-thirds done!' I cried. 'The idea is too absurd.'

'Nothing shall induce me to go on, in defiance of a warning from the dead,' said Wolfe, hastily.

'And nothing,' I replied, 'shall induce me to believe that we have received any such warning. I either saw that man, or I laboured under some kind of optical illusion. But ghosts I do not believe in.'

'As you please. You can go on if you prefer it, and take Kauffmann with you. I know my way back.'

'Agreed—except as regards Kauffmann. Let him take his choice.'

Kauffmann, having the matter explained to him, elected at once to go back with Egerton Wolfe.

'If the Herr Englishman has been warned in a vision,' he said, crossing himself devoutly, 'it is suicide to go on. Obey the blessed spirit, mein Herr!'

But nothing now would have induced me to turn back, even if I had felt inclined to do so; so, agreeing to meet next day at Schwartzenfelden, my friend and I said good-bye.

'God grant you may come to no harm, dear old fellow,' said Wolfe, as he turned away.

'I don't feel like harm, I assure you,' I replied, laughing.

And so we parted.

I stood still and watched them till they were out of sight. At the turn of the road they paused and looked back. When Wolfe waved his hand for the last time, and finally disappeared, I could not repress a sudden thrill—he looked so like the figure of my illusion!

For that it was an illusion, I did not doubt for a moment. Such phenomena, though not common, are by no means unheard-of. I had talked with more than one eminent physician on this very subject, and I remembered that each had spoken of cases within his own experience. Besides, there was the famous case of Nicolai, the bookseller of Berlin; not to mention many others, equally well attested. That I must have been temporarily in the condition of persons so affected, I took for granted; and yet I felt well—never better; my head cool—my mind clear—my pulse regular. Well—I would never disbelieve in hallucinations again. To that I made up my mind; but as for ghosts . . . pshaw! how could any sane man, above all, such a man as Egerton Wolfe, believe in ghosts?

Reasoning thus, and smiling to myself, I tightened the shoulder-straps of my knapsack, took a pull at my wine-flask, and set off towards the tunnel.

It was still half a mile distant; for I had stopped on first sight of

the figure, before we were half across the space that lay between that dark opening and the turn of the road above. And now, plodding steadily towards it, I examined the ground at every step (especially on the side of the precipice) for any path or rocky projection of which a man could possibly have availed himself for retreat or shelter; but the smooth upright wall of solid limestone on the one hand, and the sheer, inaccessible, giddy depths on the other, made all such explanation impossible. Thrown back thus on the illusion theory, I paused once or twice, and tried to conjure up the figure before my eyes, but in vain.

And now, with every step that I took, the mouth of the tunnel grew larger, and the depth of shade within it blacker and more mysterious. I was by this time near enough to see that it was faced with brickwork—that it spanned the full width of the road — and that it was more than lofty enough for an old-fashioned, top-heavy diligence to pass under it. The next moment, being within half a dozen yards of it, I distinctly heard the cool murmur of the more distant waterfall (now hidden by the great mountain spur through which the gallery was carried); and the next moment after that, I had plunged into the tunnel.

It was like the transition from an orchid-house to an ice-house—from mid-day to midnight. The darkness was profound, and so intense the sudden chill, that for the first second it almost took my breath away.

The roof and sides of the gallery, and the road beneath my feet, were all hewn in the solid rock. A sharp, arrowy gleam of light, shooting athwart the gloom about fifty yards ahead, marked the position of the first loop-hole. A second, a third, a fourth, as many perhaps as eight or ten, gleamed faintly in the distance. The tiny blue speck which showed where the gallery opened out again upon the day, looked at least a mile away. The path under foot was wet and slippery; and as I went on, and my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I saw that every part of the tunnel was streaming with moisture.

I pushed on rapidly. The first and second loopholes were soon left behind, but at the third I paused for a moment to breathe the outer air. Then, for the first time, I observed that every rut in the road beneath my feet was filled with running water.

I hurried on faster and faster. I shivered. I felt the cold seizing me. The arched entrance through which I had just passed had dwindled already to a shining patch no bigger than my hand, while the tiny blue speck on ahead seemed far off as ever. Meanwhile the tunnel was dripping like a shower-bath.

All at once, my attention was arrested by a sound—a strange indescribable sound—heavy, muffled, as of mighty forces at work in the heart of the mountain. I stood still—I held my breath—I fancied I felt the solid rock vibrate beneath my feet! Then it flashed upon me that I must now be approaching that part of the gallery behind which the waterfall was conducted, and that what I heard was the muffled roar of its descent. At the same moment, chancing to look down at my feet, I saw that the road was an inch deep in running water from wall to wall.

Now, lawyer as I am, and ignorant of the first principles of civil engineering, I felt sure that this much-praised Herr Becker should at least have made his tunnel water-tight. That it leaked somewhere was plain, and that it should be suffered to go on leaking to the discomfort of travellers was simply intolerable. An inch of water, for instance, was more than . . . . an inch did I say? Gracious heavens! since the moment I looked, it had risen to three—it was closing over my boots—it was becoming a rushing torrent!

In that instant a great horror fell upon me—the horror of darkness and sudden death. I turned, flung away my Alpenstock, and fled for my life. Fled blindly, breathlessly, wildly, with the horrible grinding sound of the imprisoned waterfall in my ears, and the gathering torrent at my heels!

Never while I live shall I forget the agony of those next few seconds—the icy numbness seizing on my limbs—the sudden, frightful sense of impeded respiration—the water rising, eddying, clamouring, pursuing me, passing me—the swirl of it, as it flashed past each loophole in succession—the rush with which (as I strained on to the mouth of the gallery, now not a dozen yards distant) it leaped out into the sunlight like a living thing, and dashed to the edge of the precipice!

At that supreme instant, just as I had darted out through the echoing arch and staggered a few paces up the road, a deafening report, crackling, hurried, tremendous, like the explosion of a mine,

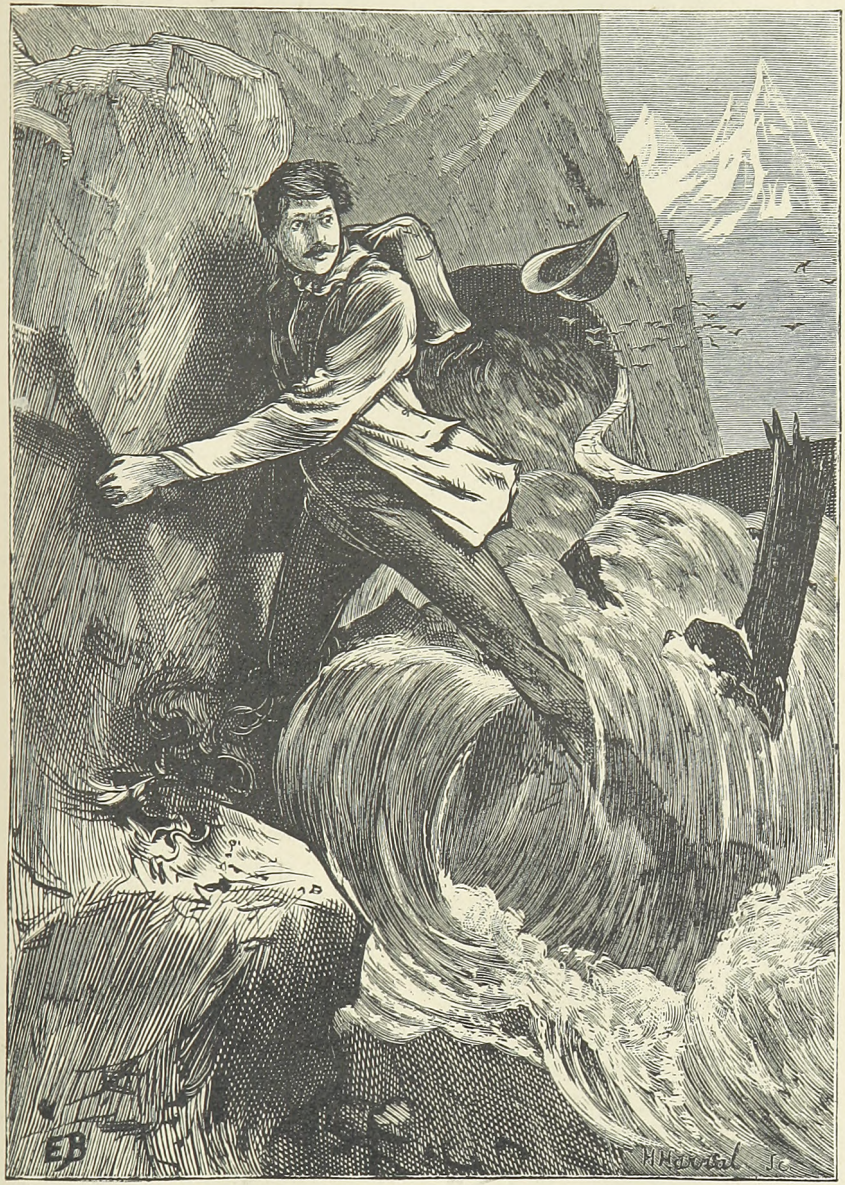
rent the air and roused a hundred echoes. It was followed by a moment of strange and terrible suspense. Then, with a deep and sullen roar, audible above all the rolling thunders of the mountains round, a mighty wave—smooth, solid, glassy, like an Atlantic wave on an English western coast—came gleaming up the mouth of the tunnel, paused as it were, upon the threshold, reared its majestic crest, curved, trembled, burst in a cataract of foam, flooded the road for yards beyond the spot where I was clinging to the rock like a limpet, and rushing back again, as the wave rushes down the beach, hurled itself over the cliff, and vanished in a cloud of mist.

After this, the imprisoned flood came pouring out tumultuously for several minutes, bringing with it fragments of rock and masonry, and filling the road with débris; but even this disturbance presently subsided, and almost as soon as the last echoes of the explosion had died away, the liberated waters were rippling pleasantly along their new bed, sparkling out into the sunshine as they emerged from the gallery, and gliding in a smooth continuous stream over the brink of the precipice, thence to fall, in multitudinous wavy folds and wreaths of prismatic mist, into the valley two thousand feet below.

For myself, drenched to the skin as I was, I could do nothing but turn back and follow meekly in the track of Egerton Wolfe and Peter Kauffman. How I did so, dripping and weary, and minus my Alpenstock; how I arrived at the châlet about sunset, shivering and hungry, just in time to claim my share of a capital omelette and a dish of mountain trout; how the Swiss press rang with my escape for at least nine days after the event; how the Herr Becker was liberally censured for his defective engineering; and how Egerton Wolfe believes to this day that his brother Lawrence came back from the dead to save us from utter destruction; are matters upon which it were needless to dwell in these pages. Enough that I narrowly escaped with my life, and that had we gone on, as we doubtless should have gone on but for the delay consequent upon my illusion, we should most probably have been in the heart of the tunnel at the time of the explosion, and not one left to tell the tale.

Nevertheless, my dear friends, I do not believe, and I have made up my mind never to believe—in ghosts.

AMELIA B. EDWARDS.



'WHERE I WAS CLINGING TO THE ROCK LIKE A LIMPET.'

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BRITISH
12 JA 72
MUSEUM

A REGRET.

You never saw her face? It was so fair!
Such thought and feeling were reflected there,
And o'er it quick pink blushes went and came
Emotional and shy—not born of shame—
And sudden smiles followed each other fast,
As when a sun-touched stream goes rippling past,
Till, like that sunshine, something bright and warm
Gave her most careless words a secret charm.
Oh! she was such a Joy! And now, what pain!
Never again to see her—never again!

You never heard her sing? Her snowy throat,
Bird-like, trilled forth each clear and fluent note.
In the soft shadow of her perfect eyes,
Down-cast, or lifted rapturous to the skies;
The Poet's words lay as it were enshrined
With equal melody of voice and mind;
And the sweet singer, dearer and more dear,
Grew with each sound that melted on your ear.
Silence is round me now. I yearn in vain.
Never again that music—never again!

You never clasped her hand; nor knew how much
Of cordial welcome lived in that light touch!
Nor saw her, with a fluttering swiftness come,
And stand all radiant on the steps of Home;
Her eager lips apart—her cheek and brow
Suffused and rosy with a wakening glow—
As though some inner flame began to burn,
Greeting the festival of your return;
Some innocent Lamp of Gladness, newly lit,
And she the Priestess who attended it.
Oh! blank dark Life—how bear your desolate pain?
Never again that welcome. Never again!

Caroline Norton.

THE ECHO OF THE BELLS.

By the Author of 'Too Bright to Last.'

Awkward, ugly, dear old Jim Millar! What matter that your broad shoulders are more bent to the desk than beautified by drill, and that your bearing has an air rather of the schools than of the world: beneath your time-honoured coat beats heart staunch as Grecian hero's; and truth dividing as ever noble Roman of them all is the brain which spends itself so ungrudgingly for the widowed mother and pretty sister, whose sole support you are! Nevertheless, so little in truth is there about you of the hero of romance—I almost hesitate to invest you with those trappings which appertain of right to that brief part you played now longer ago than yesterday. Yet all men have their day—and towards the middle of a life whereof one may call the warp dulness and the woof labour, Jim finds his—what time the snow-clad earth is trampled beneath the feet light or weary of such as keep the feast so dear to British heart.

On lines said, and Latin primers shut, a heartfelt sigh of relief supervenes. For the space of five weeks he is a free man. Experience tells him that by-and-by he will be weary of this freedom of his—will, together with the women of his household, pine for Plato, yearn after Liddell and Scott, and in desperation begin to teach his youngest sister the Greek alphabet—but this, the first day of the holidays, is bright with promise of those that are to come; and with hands thrust into his pockets, and gown hanging half off his shoulders, he saunters down the High Street of Weaverleigh as hopeful as a prince and happier than a king.

They are semi-detached houses, the Wilderness and Oswestry Villa, and the view each has into the other's bow-windowed drawing-room is obstructed merely by stuccoed twin porticos, which stare yet more unblushingly at one another in the middle.

They share a patch of grass, which an iron railing divides, and then in front of them is the broad high road, strewn on this twenty-third of December with hay and fugitive papers, and blocked with three yellow vans, professing from the inscription on each, to transport, without fracture or preparatory packing, the home gods by road, or rail, or river.

Glancing upwards, with not unpardonable curiosity, at his new neighbour's window, he sees there—only a face—but which, straightway forgetting the family dinner awaiting him within, he shelters himself in his own doorway, and scrutinises in a manner more exact than justifiable, even in a mathematician.

A young, very young face,—whose proprietor may, he judges, perhaps reckon eighteen years—shaded by bright hair which, cut squarely on the forehead, has been allowed elsewhere to develop as it will the luxuriant energetic curls kind nature deems most becoming to that rosebud complexion, and wide-opened saintly eyes of blue. A face with a wistful yet trusting expression which now and again one sees in old age and childhood—between the two never. James Millar stands there strangely attracted, profoundly moved by it.

The face at the window watches three men struggling with something tied up in green baize, and, as I said before, Jim watches the face. A few minutes more and it crumples itself up with anxiety, for the green baize mystery is in imminent danger, and the window being hastily thrown open, a head and shoulders clad in purple thrusts itself forth, and a voice my friend thinks particularly touching, exclaims, in piteous accents, 'Oh, please take care of my poor piano!'

It is heavy beyond a doubt; but the men are strong and the distance short; so I suppose it is the feeling that it is entirely a work of supererogation, and that he is not in the least called upon to make or meddle in the matter, which combats so successfully Jim's English apathy, and inducing him to bring that broad shoulder of his to bear on the bulky mass before him, produces those vigorous heaves which land it at last safely in the drawing-room of Oswestry Villa.

The proprietor of the road, rail, and river conveyance and his assistants mop their faces, and a gentle enquiry for beer becomes au-

dible. 'Oh, please ask Sarah,' replies the voice Mr. Millar considers so sweet, and starting, he turns round and takes off his cap. Poor Jim! If manners had formed part of the curriculum of Weaverleigh school, he might have sought in vain among his acquaintances for testimonials to his fitness for a mastership therein. He reddens—not becomingly—and begins stupidly: 'I beg your pardon, I'm sure, for coming in; but there seemed to be some difficulty, and I was standing close by.'

'Oh, many thanks, I'm much obliged.' She is not nearly so shy as Jim, and when she has laughed and blushed and laughed again, she is quite at her ease, and goes on: 'It was very good-natured of you. I thought at one time it must have gone—my poor dear piano; and there were several horrid men and odious boys standing around, who never lifted so much as a finger.'

Despite his gratitude at having escaped this classification, he finds it difficult to shake off his embarrassment, and ransacks vainly his imagination for a civil speech suited to the occasion.

'Hallo, old fellow! turned up in time for the fun after all? You'd best go home again; there isn't only half a chicken-pie in the larder, and Peggie fried some ham herself this morning, and it was oh, so nasty! and she burned her finger—and I know who doesn't like short commons, and we aren't any of us particularly spoons on you; do go away;' and Millar feels something like a tiny pat on his shoulder, and there glides into view a child so ridiculously resembling her elder sister, that he looks from one to another with wonder near akin to amusement.

'Good gracious, it isn't Alf after all! Who's this man? How naughty of you, Peggie, to let strange men into the house. He'll steal the plate. I know he will; Ma said he would.'

'Hush, rude little Primrose! This gentleman has been of great use in lifting the piano; you ought to thank him.'

'Is he a gentleman, Peggie? He's got a shocking bad hat, if that queer square thing in his hand is indeed a hat.'

Peggie and Millar look at each other; there is a twitching of the corners of both of their mouths; and then, half friends already, they laugh frankly. 'My little sister's manners have been ruined by an idle brother, who has amused himself by making her repeat parrot-wise as many pert speeches as he could string together.'

'I say, are you a gentleman?' interrupts Primrose, with some asperity, having by no means come to a decision on the subject, and not to be put off in this way.

'I can't tell you,' says he, gravely; 'people are of two minds about it.'

'Do you keep a shop, or do anything for a living—for if you do you aren't.'

'Then I aren't—for I teach in a school.'

'What! a schoolmaster, an ogre—a whipper of children, are you? I hate you. I'll make my brother Alf kill you, as he swore he would Peggie if she wouldn't be his wife.'

'Primrose! I blush for you!'—and Peggie draws the child towards her, and puts her hand over her little mouth.

'I'll bite you if you don't let me go, Peggie.'

'Well then,' her sister says, with great judgment, 'look there, they are carrying in your doll's house.'

Primrose makes a rush to the window, and, relieved of her presence, Millar after his own fashion gives Peggie to understand that they are neighbours.

She responds eagerly: 'Do you live next door? Oh, tell me, is that your wife? are those your sisters?—those pretty girls who laugh so merrily, and seem so happy together?'

'I have no wife; they are my sisters; there are four of them. Will you let them come and see you some day? I mean, when you are quite settled and comfortable.'

Peggie is not very certain whether it is the proper thing to prolong this conversation with a stranger; but taking courage from the fact that he is not very young, and not at all good looking, makes answer with due discretion that she shall be very glad—that is to say, she means of course her stepmother, Mrs. Lane, will be delighted when she joins her next week.

Then looking up at him, a novel feeling of shyness overcomes her, on perceiving which Jim's own diffidence diminishes marvellously, and, pursuing his enquiries with the preliminary question, 'Are you and your little sister all alone, then, here?' extracts from her the information that it had not been intended that it should be so; but that her stepmother's illness on the eve of their sudden departure had, with divers circumstances, compelled her, with no other companion-

ship than her tiny half-sister, to undertake the responsibility of their removal from Dorsetshire.

'Aren't you frightened—you two children, here in the house by yourselves?'

'Oh no, not very. We are putting a bold face on the matter, and mean to make the best of it. I'm certainly sorry Mrs. Lane has been obliged to keep the other servants with her; but we have Sarah, you see. I daresay we shall do very well, though I own I wish they hadn't sent the plate with us in a chest which says what it is as plainly as though it spoke.'

Then Margaret Lane thinks she has said over much, and the shyness grows on her with such rapidity that Millar is constrained thereby to remember the fact of the two o'clock dinner awaiting him; and bestowing on her an angular bow, which is answered by quite a formal little sweep, before Primrose, who is flattening her nose against the window, has time to look round, he is gone.

Dinner has reached that period when the leg of mutton is turned to receive a longitudinal incision as the only son of the house drops into his accustomed seat, with a cloud of conscious guilt on his face. Four girls stare at him after the manner of sisters, and one among them, bright-eyed and dark-haired, commences an exhortation on punctuality, to which he listens with becoming humility, whilst another pale child of fifteen, catching unobserved his hand, comforts herself and him with a friendly little pinch.

'What a regularly orthodox jolly Christmas,' says, by way of giving a pleasanter turn to the conversation, the fattest and most good-natured of the maidens. 'I love to see the snow on the ground; it's suggestive of big fires, and plum-puddings, and family gatherings; but for those wretched people next door to be moving into a new house at this time, how truly miserable it must be.'

'Who knows anything about them?'

'I do,' says the black-eyed Louie. 'Mr. Brick, the baker, told me all about it this morning, and the Oswestry Villa servant told him.'

'Good heavens, mother! do you suffer the girls to talk like this?' growls Jim, listening nevertheless.

He is beneath contempt, and Louie proceeds. 'Mrs. Lane is coming here to send a little boy to the school. The young lady—a little

wax-doll thing in a red cloak—a child of six, and a stupid-looking maid, are all who have arrived; the others are to follow. *Voilà tout.* Its rather hard Jim should call a kindly interest in one's neighbours vulgar gossip.'

'Don't squabble, dears,' says motherly Mrs. Millar, drawing her soft shawl more closely round her. 'But really, now you bring it to my notice, I don't like to think of those poor children next door. 'Twould, after all, be but neighbourly to go in bye and bye and see if we can persuade them to join us.'

'Oh do, mother!' cries gentle Nell, with an enthusiasm which is speedily overridden by Louie's 'So unconventional and odd. Still, I don't object very much if mamma likes; they may be, after all, nice people, and we shall gain as much as they by the civility; I think I'll go with you.'

'No, no!' commands the apparently-engrossed-with-his-dinner Jim, in a voice like distant thunder.

They stare at him again, and once more he relapses into that silence which is habitual to him.

It is so very new, so freshly varnished, this Oswestry Villa; there is withal so overpowering a smell of new carpets, and chintz; and the sight of the piled-up furniture, and half-unpacked ornaments produces such a feeling of utter desolation; that, as the shades of evening begin to fall, Margaret Lane sits down on an empty packing-case with the conviction that, sooner or later as it may be, a certain choking feeling in her throat must degenerate into a sob.

Curled into a ball on a fur rug at her feet lies Primrose. The weary day through she has been fretful; and that she has at length fallen asleep for a short hour is a comfort for which poor Peggie does not forget to return thanks as she caresses the small face, on which the childish frown still rests.

It is Christmas Eve! The men belonging to the vans are keeping it as they deem most meet, and Mrs. Millar waits long at the door before Sarah, with her sleeves tucked up, ushers her into the presence of her young mistress. Seeing at once the sleeping child, she waves her hand to Peggie to remain seated, and with a grateful glance the girl points to a chair standing solitary as a pelican in the wilderness,

and Jim Millar's mother sits down and looks into the fair young tired face, and for a while neither of them speak.

At last Peggie says : 'She sleeps soundly ; we need not fear disturbing her. I think you live next door to us, don't you? I have seen you passing once or twice; you are those girls' mother ;' and then I don't know what in that motherly face she sees of pity, and sympathy, and womanly love, but the lump in her throat grows till it well-nigh stifles her ; and hiding her face in Mrs. Millar's lap, she sobs aloud, 'Ah ! why haven't I, too, a mother?' And into that good woman's mind it comes that of all others this night it is when mothers kissing their children are wont to whisper what holy love is theirs, that blessed mother felt as at this time long ago ; and yearning over this motherless one with exceeding love, she, stooping to the bowed head, parts the golden hair, and leaves on her brow a kiss nigh as sweet as the one poor Peggie craves.

They sit together, hand claspt in hand, like friends old griefs have knit together ; and as, with sweetly soothing words, Mrs. Millar speaks to Peggie, so engrossed is she with her occupation, that, standing before her noiselessly and suddenly in the gathering dusk, she recognises with difficulty the gaunt figure of her son.

Ah ! believe me, what old tales tell is true—mother love sharpens mother's wit. Mrs. Millar, gazing up into Jim's face, becomes there and then a philosopher, and knows how Love—like his twin power Death—treats Time as a toy; how the old fellow's hour-glass he turns in his sportive rosy hands, that so are minutes hours and years minutes; that in many a stout and arrow-defying brain he revels each summer day in confusion dire as reigns in meekest maiden brain.

And looking down at both—his mother and that other—my dear old Jim's eyes moisten with that weakness which is often born of strength. Never a reason for having followed her in is he able to suggest to his own conscience; but he sits down by the smouldering fire on a bale of carpets with a right-to-be-there air which but one thing in the world can give, and which explains itself when Peggie lifts her head and welcomes him with a mute gesture of welcome, not surprise. She shakes back her hair and smiles. 'I know what your son has come for. He is troubled in his mind about the plate. Confess it now—aren't you?'

He gives back the smile, a different one to hers, and her eyes sink beneath his, and unwittingly her tone changes. 'I'm half afraid of you laughing at me; but I've known you a hundred years at least, and I can't breathe till you are as well acquainted with me.'

And she, pouring forth artless unconnected words, they gather from them the short, half-sad story of her young life. They know of the burden of that wealth which makes her mourn yet more deeply the stern father who died a year ago; of the stepmother who covets for the unconscious Primrose and her little brother the hated gold; and lastly, with a shudder, she tells them of that stepmother's half-mad son, who seeks pertinaciously her unwilling hand. Thus much is she at home with the mother and son, that she scarcely hesitates to confide to them not alone her loathing, but her fear of this last. 'Don't think me a foolish child; and oh, above all things, remember I have not a friend in the world, and don't call me forward; but his threats, which his mother laughs at as fun; his eyes, which she calls so sparkling, which strike me cold with terror, are the reasons which have driven me away all by myself this cold Christmas time, when friend meets friend, and at every other hearth there is peace and love. This is my own house, into which I have a right to forbid his entrance.'

'Is this the 'Alf' of whom the child spoke?' asks Millar, and she hears the teeth grinding in his strong firm jaw.

'Yes. And did I not fear, I should pity him from my heart, so hardly does that thin line separate him from the dreadful class of beings who are so far from us although so near. Want of judicious management on the part of his mother has, I believe, made him worse than he otherwise would be; for, conscious of the presence of insanity in his father's family, she has from childhood treated him with an indulgence which now renders him perfectly intolerant of contradiction. Loving me, as I believe, rather for the sake of my money than myself, he has taken absurdly to heart my refusal of his equally absurd offer of marriage, has made even this dear child's affection a means of tormenting me, and was with the greatest difficulty dissuaded from accompanying me on my journey. And now can you wonder that away from him I feel like a bird escaped from a snare, eager to pour my song of deliverance into any good-natured listener's ear?'

What does it signify whether dream be brief as life, or long as Rip van Winkle's? One holds in its grasp as easily as the other all this world can give of joy or sorrow.

Jim Millar knows nought of time as he watches this bright-haired maiden, wearing the crown of his new-born love, sitting amongst his well-known gamesome sisters.

A simple hospitable folk are the Millars, with hearts not so over-wrapped by world-customs as to bar the entrance of these two lonely ones, rich in all save what Home—happy, holy Home!—gives only. And as one family they join together in those merry games of byegone years which some households amongst us still conserve in what freshness was theirs when the world was young. All, save Jim, who, somewhat apart from the others, gazes in an ecstacy of bliss on her who in this short, fair time, has grown 'so dear—so dear.'

And so the happy hours creep on, and night drawing on apace, future meetings are arranged, and cheerful farewells said, and Jim stands once more beneath his stuccoed portico, holding in one arm Primrose—who, kittenwise, has alternately slept and played throughout the evening, and with the other guiding Peggie, who clings to him timorously, she scarce knows why. He feels her little hand shake on his arm, and leans down towards her. Her light whisper reaches him: 'I saw a face, I heard a voice; ah, don't laugh, I'm very frightened.'

'Come back with me this instant; you'll stay with us to-night.'

'No, indeed,' with an attempt at a laugh. 'I'm brave once more. Why, I should but blush for my cowardice to-morrow. Hark! what I thought a voice was but the waits; Christmas Day draws near.'

Primrose sleeping peacefully on his shoulder, enveloped in many thicknesses of plaid, Jim and Peggie lean over the Wilderness gate and listen to the yet distant minstrels who sing the coming glorious dawn—listen, speaking meanwhile many a sweet and solemn word; and when my old friend takes in his the pure young hand so frankly yielded him, it is rather the amity of fellow-pilgrims than fancy bred of earth which binds those hearts together for evermore.

Another good-bye, and he is leaving her under the shelter of her own roof.

'God bless you!' he says, and she hears the snow-covered path trodden beneath his foot.

'Come,' cries she, with a laugh which holds a certain pathos of its own, 'come back and say that once more to me, so shall I heedless brave the terrors of the night.'

He comes back, and taking suddenly her face in both his hands, kisses her brow, and bids God bless the Christmas to her and him.

Then he watches her slowly ascending the stairs, carrying with difficulty the weary, unwilling Primrose; and Sarah appearing from an adjacent kitchen, yawning, double-locks the door after him, and he retraces his steps to the Wilderness, each inmate of which is already wrapped in deepest slumber.

There is not much room to spare at the Wilderness, and a tiny cabin over the hall door is all it has been thought necessary to devote to the accommodation of the master of the house. Millar is the meekest of men, and accepting his position with thankfulness, opens his window before retiring to rest, with a feeling of great indifference as to the number of cubic inches his domicile contains.

There are the chimes now: hear them ring! It is Christmas morning, and a world of happy, heaven-born thoughts crowd his tender, simple heart, as he breathes a prayer for her who has shed so lovely and new a radiance on his hitherto uneventful life. They are sweet, these old bells—almost like an echo of them does he hear the voice which has grown so exquisitely dear to him. Heaven shield her, for he almost trembles to think of her in that lonely house.

And, listening to the clashing of those bells, he falls into an uneasy, dreamful sleep, which lasts he knows not how long, till he wakes with a start and a fancy strong as fact that between those clashes he hears his own name called.

He gets up, and, hastily dressing himself, leans from the window. Nay, now surely it is no fancy—can he ever mistake that voice; and the words are, 'Help! oh, for mercy's sake, save me.'

If he is to perish for his imprudence, Jim must see from whence comes that voice, which implores, as it seems to him, each moment more urgently; and how to get into the next house with the smallest possible waste of time is the only question which proposes itself to him.

Suddenly he remembers that side by side with his own window is another, which it is just practicable for him to reach. With some difficulty he succeeds in forcing his huge body through the narrow

slit, assuredly never designed with such a purpose, and he stands on the sill, catching hold of the stuccoed trumpery which is supposed to decorate the window. Can he step from one of these sills to the other, he wonders. No. Jim is a brave man, yet he hesitates for one instant; in another he is clinging to the foliated ornaments of Oswestry Villa. He opens the window cautiously, and the moon, in a momentary victory over the clouds, shows him a room similar to his own, furnished as a boudoir, with books and a small piano.

All is once more darkness, and he gropes his way to where he knows from experience the door must be.

He finds it, crosses the threshhold, and strikes his foot suddenly on something lying across it—something soft, something warm, something strange.

Through his veins there strikes an awful terror of he knows not what, and he stoops and touches it—his hand is wet!

There is no light nor sound, and for a moment he remains as one paralysed. Then through the passages comes thrilling a childish treble—'Oh Peggie, my darling, where are you gone?' She's awake, is Primrose, and Peggie is gone, and she hears Alf muttering in one of his tantrums, and she's scared to death. 'Call the next door schoolmaster, Peg; I'd rather be beat by him than that cruel Alf should kill my Peggie. And he's got a knife too, sister, all red. I saw it shine—I are-n't dreaming!'

And what was on the floor rests in Jim Millar's arms, and he knows that he holds there all that earth has for him of fair and precious; that it is her hand which droops so listlessly on his own, and that her golden hair it is which clings so persistently to his shoulder.

'Primrose,' he struggles to say calmly, speaking between the pealing of the early morning bells, 'I am here—I, the schoolmaster. Don't be frightened—tell me what has happened. Don't be frightened. Where is Sarah?'

'Oh! it is you, is it? Where have they taken my Peggie? Tell me, kind man, and I will love you for ever. Peggie loves you; I know she does. I heard her say your name in her prayers, before she went to write that letter in the little room she calls her own. She hadn't even taken off her pretty white gown with the blue ribbons. Tell me where she has gone.'

'Call Sarah, my dear,' he says, trying to speak in his everyday voice; feeling, with that burden of his, well-nigh as hysterical as a woman, and longing for, yet fearing, the first moonbeam which should herald the truth.

'I've been to Sarah, all the way upstairs with my bare little feet, and she snores, oh! so loud, and won't stir; but I'll go again once more, and it won't be naughty, p'raps, to pinch her.' And Jim hears little feet pattering into distance, and Sarah reluctantly aroused from her heavy slumbers, and, unable to comprehend the nature of the business, questioning the necessity of further exertion, and disposed with a slap on the back to relegate Primrose to bed.

Still he holds Margaret in his arms, and his own heart beats too loudly for him to listen to aught that may declare it to be a reality and not a memory of what was which he clasps so fondly.

And when Sarah, after much match-striking, has kindled a flickering light, and descends followed by Primrose pulling her back by the gown, he knows the worst, recognises the lovely white face, unillumined as yet by the gracious smile which will by-and-bye come to it, sees where some cruel blundering knife has set the crimson tide of life at liberty; and, all deficient as he is in such ghastly science, bows at the coming of his sole rival—Death.

Even then he knows how to be thankful for the stolidity with which Sarah is endowed; who, without word or scream, snatches Primrose in her arms before the light has made her any the wiser, and, hastily throwing a blanket over her, rushes out with her into the night, and rings such a peal at the front bell of the Wilderness as alarms not only the servants but Mrs. Millar and the girls.

Following closely on Sarah's footsteps, another they then reck but little of leaves that house, and Alfred Reed goes his way laughing, wiping recklessly on his sleeve the knife which has been the instrument of his maniacal revenge.

Sarah has left the candle, and Jim carries Margaret to a sofa he sees, and lays her down; and, kneeling beside her, looks into her face, and takes her hand in his.

Suddenly the long dark lashes are raised, and turned towards him are her eyes—'deeper than the depth of waters stilled at eve.' They know him, and they pray.

A brilliant, a victorious smile lightens her face; and between the

chimes Jim hears, as it were, an angel's voice bidding him ever more rejoice !

What shall I tell you more ? Do you care to know all the ghastly particulars of the morrow ? Of the indolent stepmother, whose self-pity usurps the place of sorrow for the innocent girl whose gentleness had always evoked her languid love, or horror at the awful deed perpetrated by her unhappy son, who expiates with a living death his unbridled temper and her thoughtlessness ? No foolish sentimentality prevents her, after a decorous interval, taking possession of Oswestry Villa, where, rather revelling in the sensation recent events have caused, she accepts the freely-bestowed attentions of the neighbourhood, and the devoted service of the Millars, with as much nonchalance as she does the rest of the inheritance accruing to her from poor Peggie.

Rather let me tell you of my dear old friend, who, drinking perpetually of that only Lethe of the past and present, Daily Toil, awaits in patience the dawning of that perfect light of which Heaven in its mercy has vouchsafed him a glimpse.

'Twas but the dream of a day, and he is a romantic fool, perhaps. The greatest clerks, you know, are not the wisest men. Yet as he sits there before his desk, leaning back in a work-won interval of meditation, I envy Jim Millar ; for his hand drops on the curly head of little Primrose nestling confidingly at his feet, and a wondrous look of peace grows on his face as memory takes him, without an effort, back to that Christmas Eve when first he heard, as now he hears again, that Echo of the Bells—the angel shout, Rejoice !

ALICE FISHER.

THE CRITICAL SPIRIT.

'JUDGE nothing before the time.' This is a hard saying. Who can bear it? It certainly was never harder to bear and to obey than in England at the present day. We are all tempted to judge, bidden to judge; indeed—as it seems to us—compelled to judge. There was never a country, perhaps, in which the critical spirit was so thoroughly in the ascendant. I simply state the fact, without approving it or disapproving it, when I say that every man now is—or, in the opinion of his fellow-citizens, ought to be—an independent critic, exercising his own private opinion to the utmost in all matters, and judging boldly of creeds, institutions, statesmen, prelates, artists, poets, men of science. He has his word about them each and all; and usually his word of blame as well as his word of praise. To accept fully—or, as it is now called, wholesale; to follow loyally—or, as it is now called, blindly; to admire heartily—or, as it is now called, fanatically:—these are considered signs of weakness or credulity. To believe intensely; to act unhesitatingly; to admire passionately; all this is, as the latest slang phrases it, bad form; a proof that a man is not likely to win in the race of this world the prize whereof is the greatest possible enjoyment with the least possible work.

The wise man, therefore, we are told, must nowadays judge all things; men, opinions, plans. He must, for his own safety's sake, take care how he commits himself rashly; and therefore he must be on the watch everywhere for elements of weakness; for self-seeking, for double-mindedness, for illogicality, for inaccuracy, for all which may endanger success. He must, if he can, judge for himself. If not, he must let the press judge for him, and tell him what and whom to approve or disapprove. By so doing he does not give up his own independence, his own self-opinion, any more than the

devotee does when she chooses a spiritual director. She judges her director ere she submits to him: so does the man of the world his periodical; and each, in the act of surrendering reason and judgment to another's keeping, commits thereby an act of the purest self-will and self-opinion.

I am not blaming; I am not even complaining: such a state of mind is inevitable at the present time.

For this is—it is folly to deny it—an essentially revolutionary age. I do not talk of political revolutions. They are but a symptom—and a very unimportant one—of a far deeper and wider fact; of an universal dissatisfaction, an universal spirit of change, in all classes, of all opinions; the spirit of change which is gaining ground day by day in this rising generation, till, in the eyes of the great majority, a man is not considered to be doing his duty as a man unless he has a project for altering something or other.

I do not complain of this. I believe that this, too, is God's doing; that infinite good will come out of it—to the good: to the bad no good can come out of anything. For knaves and fools it matters not whether they alter for better or for worse, or whether they remain as they are. They will be still on the broad road which (whatever round it may traverse) still leads to destruction.

But meanwhile, while the creeds and institutions of the last fifteen hundred years are seething piecemeal in the Medea's caldron of reform, thoughtful men will, and must, stand by and hold their peace, to see what will come out again reorganised into new life and usefulness. Indeed, the thoughtful man has a right to say—Critical? And why should not I be critical? If men cannot make up their minds, why should I? Would you have me go out into the wilderness and expose myself to trouble and disappointment, that I may worship that reed shaken with the wind called nowadays public opinion? Or to worship either those clothed in purple and fine linen who used to be found in the palaces of Eastern despots, but now haunt rather the counting-house and the exchange, preaching—Get money; honestly if you can, but still get money. But am I to go out to find a prophet? Let the prophet first proclaim himself a prophet. Why should I call him one? Why should I call a man infallible when he does not call himself infallible? Why should I believe in a man when he does not believe in himself?

Let me rather, with the old Stoics, refrain from giving any opinion, and refuse to commit myself on matters concerning which I do not decide, and cannot decide.

Nay, let me go further; and say to the preacher—You accuse me and my critical spirit of judging. That is exactly what I am trying not to do. I am trying to obey, in my own way, the very command of the apostle which you quote against me; trying to judge nothing before the time, until someone or something—you with St. Paul say that it will be the Lord—shall come who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of hearts. And then I will tell you what I think, because I shall know what to believe.

Well and reasonably spoken; if it were not that such men are too apt to omit (as I have just omitted) the last piece of the paragraph—And then shall every man have praise of God. Possibly, but not at present, praise from man.

For the modern rule is—Praise no man, lest he come to shame, and bring you to shame with him. Unless, of course, he is your own delegate, and reflects your own opinions; for then, in praising him, you praise yourself. Praise no man. God, of course, may praise him; for he sees the secrets of the heart. But you who cannot see the secrets of the heart, what can you do in common prudence, but judge every man by yourself? Impute to him the same motives, weaknesses, vices, which you find in yourself. Why should you fancy him a better man, a wiser man, than you are? Is not every man as good as his neighbour? I do not trust myself, says the man of the world. Why should I trust any man? I am not certain of my own opinions. Why should I put my faith in those of any man? Alas! alas; from that tendency to evil which (let philanthropists say what they will) does exist and work in human nature, it is toward this that the modern critical spirit tends in all save a few pure and noble souls.

Over the greater part of the so-called civilised world is spreading a deep distrust, a deep irreverence of every man toward his neighbour. Cloaked in the guise of virtue and of dignity, detraction simpers as impartiality, base envy struts as noble independence, and a practical unbelief in every man whom you do see atones for itself by a theoretic belief in an ideal human nature which you do not see. The Stoic with his reticence is transformed into the Cynic with his sneer;

and instead of proving all things and holding fast that which is good, men prove all things: but hold fast that which is bad. But such a temper of mind, unless it be checked by that which alone can check it—namely, the grace of God—must tend toward sheer anarchy. I do not mean political anarchy, though that has been, as a plain fact, the net result of this temper in every country which has given itself up to it. I mean a deeper and uglier anarchy—the anarchy of society, and of the family; the anarchy of the head and of the heart; which leaves poor human beings as orphans in the wilderness, to cry in vain—'What can I know? whom can I love?'

No wonder that from such a temper some seek refuge in Roman Ultramontanism. No wonder that out of their doubt, their confusion, their loneliness, they clutch eagerly at the phantoms of organisation, of brotherhood, in one infallible Church. But we who know those phantoms to be phantoms; we who have said in our hearts—as God grant we all have said—'Whatever is true, *that* is false; whatever is right, *that* is wrong.' We who must judge for ourselves, and as it seems, in such hasty babbling days as these, must too often judge, whether we will or not; what canon for judging rightly can we find?

What, saw the old one, laid down in a like case by the wisest and most loving lips which ever spoke on earth? 'Go, and tell John again the things you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and to the poor the gospel is preached.

This, I believe more and more, is the one rule by which we should judge all human opinions, endeavours, characters. Are they trying to lessen the sum of human misery, of human ignorance? Are they trying, however clumsily, to cure physical suffering, weakness, deformity, disease; and to make human bodies what God would have them? Are they trying, however clumsily, to cure spiritual evil? to raise the dead from the true death of brutality and vice? to preach to the poor a true gospel and good news of light, and freedom, and trust in God; and not a sham gospel, and bad news of darkness, and superstition, and dread?

If so, let us judge them no further. Let them pass out of the pale of our criticism. Let their creed seem to us defective, their opinions fantastic, their means irrational. God must judge of that, not we.

They are trying to do good; then they are children of the light. They are on God's side in the universe, whether they know it or not; and let that be enough for us. They are doing their best to cast out devils: and of them our Lord has said, 'Forbid them not.' 'To their own master they stand or fall; yea, and they shall stand, for God is able to make them stand;' and in them, sooner or later, may be fulfilled that law, 'If a man does God's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' Wisdom is justified of all her children: and it may be that poor well-meaning old Folly may be justified of some of hers likewise; and that in the dread day when the counsels of all hearts shall be made manifest, we—the critics, we the Pharisees, we the fastidious, we dealers in hard words and hasty judgments—shall find that we have been speaking evil of our betters, and terrified to see how near we have been to committing the sin of sins, and saying 'He cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils,' shall begin with shame to take the lowest room, crying—'God forgive me for every cruel word I ever spoke,'—thankful if there be room left for us at all in the outermost forecourt of Him who came not to condemn the world, but that the world by Him might be saved.

Yes, if we would keep ourselves unspotted from the world; if we would save our own character from the blight of cynicism and envy; this is our only method: to cultivate what a distinguished thinker has called of late sweetness and light; the charity which comes from knowledge, the knowledge which comes from charity; the temper of which it is written—'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him: but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because darkness has blinded his eyes.' Ah that we could believe that! Ah that we could believe that God is love; and that he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Then we should have no need to be told to cultivate sweetness and light; for they would seem to us the only temper which could make life tolerable in any corner of the Universe.

And more: we should not merely cultivate them, we should pray for them. For we should see that they are divine; that they are of the very essence of the all-seeing, all-merciful Christ; that He alone can give them to us; that He, and He alone, must make us

partakers of his own spirit of light and love. We should pray to Him daily—Oh Lord, Love who embracest the universe, Light who lightest every man that comes into the world, take away from me all dakness of soul, all hardness of heart. Fill me with thy Light, that I may see all things in light. Fill me with thy Love, that I may love all things which Thou hast made.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

A 'SCENE' ON OLYMPUS.

IT had reached so far; even to the highest top of that mound upon which was seated the cloud-compeller Jupiter, in consultation upon the subject with Hercules. 'It will not do,' said Zeus; 'Juno has too much power; I cannot call Olympus my own.' 'Meaning,' returned Hercules, 'Female emancipation. Some people enslave all the world, and yet cry out to be free. We can't allow it *here.*' 'No force, my son,' said Jupiter, seeing Hercules lifting his club. 'Ladies object to *clubs,*' added Apollo, with a sunny smile: 'Hush! here they come from the other fork of the hill!'

'We've settled it all,' said the ladies, the air filling with a rosy light as they approached. 'Jupiter, we establish a limited liability; you are general manager; you, Phœbus, take the lighting department; Mercury the messages, telegraphs, and posts; Vulcan, manage the mines, and bring in a bill for their regulation; Mars, look to the Horse Guards; and Hercules, be light porter and carry the luggage.' The gods were as mute as moles, and perfectly obedient; the victory was complete. But it did not last long. The goddesses entangled the government of the universe, there was an irregular eclipse up above, a volcanic eruption below; these were trifles, but worse remained behind. The new light porter was mischievous. 'He has destroyed my silver harp,' said Diana; 'half-killed my peacock,' shrieked Juno; 'and crushed the cage of my doves as well as my bonnet-box and bonnet,' cried Venus. 'My dears!' said Minerva, 'Fancy Hercules with a band-box;' 'we are wrong. Let these male creatures do the coarser work; they are fit for it. What matters if they govern the world? we govern them. *Qui servat imperat!* Whenever I see things out of place I shall think of Hercules and the band-box.'

PERCIVAL KEANE, B.A.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT.

PRELUDE OF AN UNFINISHED POEM.

Love, that is first and last of all things made,
The light that moving has man's life for shade,
The spirit that for temporal veil has on
The souls of all men woven in unison,
One fiery raiment with all lives inwrought
And lights of sunny and starry deed and thought,
And alway through new act and passion new
Shines the divine same body and beauty through,
The body spiritual of fire and light
That is to worldly noon as noon to night ; 10
Love, that is flesh upon the spirit of man
And spirit within the flesh whence breath began ;
Love, that keeps all the choir of lives in chime ;
Love, that is blood within the veins of time ;
That wrought the whole world without stroke of hand,
Shaping the breadth of sea, the length of land,
And with the pulse and motion of his breath
Through the great heart of the earth strikes life and death,
The sweet twain chords that make the sweet time live
Through day and night of things alternative, 20
Through silence and through sound of stress and strife,
And ebb and flow of dying death and life ;
Love, that sounds loud or light in all men's ears,
Whence all men's eyes take fire from sparks of tears ;

That binds on all men's feet or chains or wings,
Love that is root and fruit of terrene things ;
Love, that the whole world's waters shall not drown,
The whole world's fiery forces not burn down ;
Love, that what time his own hands guard his head
The whole world's wrath and strength shall not strike dead ; 30
Love, that if once his own hands make his grave
The whole world's pity and sorrow shall not save ;
Love, that for every life shall not be sold,
Nor bought nor bound with iron nor with gold ;
So strong that heaven, could love bid heaven farewell,
Would turn to fruitless and unflowering hell ;
So sweet that hell, to hell could love be given,
Would turn to splendid and sonorous heaven.
Love that is fire within thee and light above,
And lives by grace of nothing but of love ; 40
Through many and lovely thoughts and much desire
Led these twain to the life of tears and fire ;
Through many and lovely days and much delight
Led these twain to the lifeless life of night.
Yea, but what then? albeit all this were thus,
And soul smote soul and left it ruinous,
And love led love as eyeless men lead men,
Through chance by chance to deathward,—Ah, what then ?
Hath love not likewise led them further yet,
Out through the years where memories rise and set, 50
Some large as suns, some moon-like warm and pale,
Some starry-sighted, some through clouds that sail
Seen as red flame through spectral float of fume,
Each with the blush of its own special bloom
On the fair face of its own coloured light,
Distinguishable in all the host of night,
Divisible from all the radiant rest
And separable in splendour ? Hath the best

Light of love's all, of all that burn and move,
A better heaven than heaven is? Hath not love 60
Made for all these their sweet particular air
To shine in, their own beams and names to bear,
Their ways to wander and their wards to keep,
Till story and song and glory and all things sleep?
Hath he not plucked from death of lovers dead
Their musical sweet memories, and kept red
The rose of their remembrance in men's eyes,
The sunsets of their stories in his skies,
The blush of their dead blood in lips that speak
Of their dead lives, and in the listener's cheek 70
That trembles with the kindling pity lit
In gracious hearts for a sweet fever-fit,
A fiery pity enkindled of pure thought
By tales that make their honey out of nought,
The faithless faith that lives without belief
Its light life through, the griefless ghost of grief?
Yea, as warm night refashions the sere blood
In storm-struck petal or in sun-struck bud,
With tender hours and tempering dew to cure
The hunger and thirst of day's distemperature 80
And ravin of the dry discolouring hours,
Hath he not bid relume their flameless flowers
With summer fire and heat of lamping song,
And bid the short-lived things, long dead, live long,
And thought remake their wan funereal fames,
And the sweet shining signs of women's names
That mark the months out and the weeks anew
He moves in changeless change of seasons through
To make the days up of his dateless year,
Flame from Queen Helen to Queen Guenevere? 90
For first of all the spherèd signs whereby
Love severs light from darkness, and most high

In the white front of January there glows
The rose-red sign of Helen like a rose :
And gold-eyed as the shore-flower shelterless
Whereon the sharp-breathed sea blows bitterness,
A storm-star that the seafarers of love
Strain their wind-wearied eyes for glimpses of,
Shoots keen through February's grey frost and damp
The lamp-like star of Hero for a lamp ; 100
The star that Marlowe sang into our skies
With mouth of gold, and morning in his eyes ;
And in clear March across the rough blue sea
The sphered sapphire of Alcyone
Makes bright the blown brows of the wind-foot year ;
And shining like a sunbeam-smitten tear
Full ere it fall, the fair next sign in sight
Burns opal-wise with April-coloured light
When air is quick with song and rain and flame,
My birth-month star that in love's heaven hath name 110
Iseult, a light of blossom and beam and shower,
My Singing sign that makes the song-tree flower ;
Next like a pale and burning pearl beyond
The rose-white sphere of flower-named Rosamond
Signs the sweet head of Maytime ; and for June
Flares like an angered and storm-reddening moon
Her signal sphere, whose Carthaginian pyre
Shadowed her traitor's flying sail with fire ;
Next, glittering as the wine-bright jacinth-stone,
A star south-risen that first to music shone, 120
The keen girl-star of golden Juliet bears
Light northward to the month whose forehead wears
Her name for flower upon it, and his trees
Mix their deep English song with Veronese ;
And like an awful sovereign chrysolite
Burning, the supreme fire that blinds the night

The hot gold head of Venus kissed by Mars,
A sun-flower among small sphered flowers of stars,
The light of Cleopatra fills and burns
The hollow of heaven whence ardent August yearns ; 130
And fixed and shining as the sister-shed
Sweet tears for Phaethon disorbed and dead,
The pale bright autumn's amber-coloured sphere,
That through September sees the saddening year
As love sees change through sorrow, hath to name
Francesca's ; and the star that watches flame
The embers of the harvest overgone
Is Thisbe's, slain of love in Babylon,
Set in the golden girdle of sweet signs
A blood-bright ruby ; last save one light shines 140
An eastern wonder of sphery chrysopras,
The star that made men mad, Angelica's ;
And latest named and lordliest, with a sound
Of swords and harps in heaven that ring it round,
Last love-light and last love-song of the year's,
Gleams like a glorious emerald Guenevere's.
These are the signs wherethrough the year sees move,
Full of the sun, the sun-god which is love,
A fiery body blood-red from the heart
Outward, with fire-white wings made wide apart, 150
That close not and unclose not, but upright
Steered without wind by their own light and might,
Sweep through the flameless fire of air that rings
From heaven to heaven with thunder of wheels and wings
And antiphones of motion-moulded rhyme
Through spaces out of space and timeless time.
So shine above dead chance and conquered change
The sphered signs, and leave without their range
Doubt and desire, and hope with fear for wife,
Pale pains, and pleasures long worn out of life. 160

Yea, even the shadows of them spiritless,
Through the dim door of sleep that seem to press,
Forms without form, a piteous people and blind,
Men and no men, whose lamentable kind
The shadow of death and shadow of life compel
Through semblances of heaven and false-faced hell,
Through dreams of light and dreams of darkness tost
On waves unnavigable, are these so lost?
Shapes that wax pale and shift in swift strange wise,
Void faces with unspeculative eyes, 170
Dim things that gaze and glare, dead mouths that move,
Featureless heads discrowned of hate and love,
Mockeries and masks of motion and mute breath,
Leavings of life, the superflux of death—
If these things and no more than these things be
Left when man ends or changes, who can see?
Or who can say with what more subtle sense
Their subtler natures taste in air less dense
A life less thick and palpable than ours,
Warmed with faint fires and sweetened with dead flowers 180
And measured by low music? how time fares
In that wan time-forgotten world of theirs,
Their pale poor world too deep for sun or star
To live in, where the eyes of Helen are,
And hers who made as God's own eyes to shine
The eyes that met them of the Florentine,
Eyes heavenly ere they knew her, but when they knew
Heavenly past name of heaven their godhead grew,
Grew great and waxed and wonderfully lit
All time for all men with the shadow of it; 190
Ah, and these too felt on them as God's grace
The pity and glory of this man's breathing face—
For these too, these my lovers, these my twain,
Saw Dante, saw God visible by pain,

With lips that thundered and with feet that trod
Before men's eyes incognisable God—
Saw love and wrath and light and night and fire
Live with one life and at one mouth respire,
And in one golden sound their whole soul heard
Sounding, one sweet immitigable word. 200

They have the night, who had like us the day;
We, whom day binds, shall have the night as they.
We, from the fetters of the light unbound,
Healed of our wound of living, shall sleep sound.
All gifts but one the jealous God may keep
From our soul's longing, one he cannot—sleep.
This, though he grudge all other grace to prayer,
This grace his closed hand cannot choose but spare.
This, though his ear be sealed to all that live,
Be it lightly given or lothly, God must give. 210
We, as the men our memory sleeps upon,
We too shall surely pass out of the sun;
Out of the sound and eyeless light of things,
Wide as the stretch of life's time-wandering wings,
Wide as the naked world and shadowless,
And long-lived as the world's own weariness.
Us too, when all the fires of time are cold,
The heights shall hide us and the depths shall hold.
Us too, when all the tears of time are dry,
The night shall lighten from her tearless eye. 220
Blind is the day and eyeless all its light,
But the large unbewildered eye of night
Hath sense and speculation; and the sheer
Limitless length of lifeless life and clear,
The timeless space wherein the brief worlds move
Clothed with light life and fruitful with light love,
With hopes that threaten, and with fears that cease,
Past fear and hope, hath in it only peace.

Yet of these lives inlaid with hopes and fears,
Spun fine as fire and jewelled thick with tears, 230
These lives made out of loves that long since were,
Lives made as ours of earth and burning air,
Fugitive flame, and water of secret springs,
And clothed with joys and sorrows as with wings,
Some yet are good, if aught be good, to save
Some while from washing wreck and wrecking wave.
Was such not theirs, the twain I take, and give
Out of my life to make their dead life live
Some days of mine, and blow my living breath
Between the lips for their sake of their death? 240
So many and many ere me have given my twain
Love and live song and honey-hearted pain,
Whose root is sweetness and whose fruit is sweet,
So many and with such joy have tracked their feet,
What should I do to follow? yet I too,
I have the heart to follow, many or few
Be the feet gone before me; for the way,
Rose-red with remnant roses of the day
Westward, and eastward white with stars that break,
Between the green and foam is fair to take 250
For any sail the sea-wind steers for me
From morning into morning, sea to sea.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

HOW BAYARD MARRIED HIS OLD LOVE.

By the Author of 'Sylvan Holt's Daughter,' 'Her Title of Honour,' &c.

It was in July, when the limes were in blossom—the great limes that stand about the gates of the old Grange House. Why they came down to Whitcliffe to be married was a nine days' wonder for the world; but there was no mystery in the matter for those who knew them. Only a little sentiment, and tender remembrance of former days spent in that place.

It had been their holiday-home when they were children, and for long after they were children. There was no blood-relationship between the two families, but there was a very close alliance of friendship. Sir Francis Bayard and Mr. Heathcote had been comrades at Charterhouse, and chums at Balliol. Both had been bred to the law, both had married happily and settled within hail of Westminster; to both children had been born, and to Sir Francis Bayard success had come in large measure. Mr. Heathcote was of a more discursive mind than his friend, and less dependent on professional advancement. He united literature with law, and did not rise to conspicuous excellence in either. But he had his patrimonial estate at Whitcliffe to fall back upon, and no extravagant personal tastes. He was a most generous person, a delightful companion, and an inalienable staunch friend.

In those days the Grange House was famous for its hospitality, and entertained some of the most distinguished men in England. Early in July, when the first crop of hay was cut, it began to fill. First arrived the children, the young Heathcotes, and in a week were brown as berries. Katie was the youngest of them, the only sister of five brothers; as intrepid a little lady amongst horses, cows, calves, foals, ducks and the minor populace of a rich farmyard, as any wench to the condition born. There was one pony for them all, and the boys commonly had it by right of capture; but Katie was not proud, and would at any time avail herself of a mount *en croupe*

with Job Clive, the farm-bailiff, a slow sententious character, whose familiarity with all living creatures and things under his hand impressed the children with a profound and respectful admiration—with a far more genuine admiration than the occult learning and wisdom of the politicians and philosophers who lounged in the shady silences of the garden, ruminating how to govern men, how to turn a period, how to coax a smile from coy, capricious fortune.

When the children had well-aired the house, Mr. and Mrs. Heathcote appeared on the scene, and with them usually came Mr. and Mrs. Bayard and their two daughters (they were not Sir Francis and My Lady then). Arthur Bayard arrived from Eton at the end of term, and with him the family assemblage was complete. But the rooms were by no means full yet. The capacity of the Grange House for the reception of guests was practically unlimited. It had long been abandoned by the Heathcotes as a residence, but it had never been dismantled, and year by year, as soon as Parliament rose, and the Law Courts were closed, they brought down their friends and acquaintances in succession, and kept the place as gay as a picnic with lively company well assorted. It was a delicious, lazy place for over-worked, mind-weary men. There was a light open carriage for who would drive, a stout cob and a venerable bay mare for who would gently ride. There were boats and bathing, and fishing and fossil-hunting on the beach, and romantic walks over the cliffs, the downs, through beautiful woods and fields. Nobody was teased to go on hot excursions; anybody might smoke and drowse the days away, fearless of being called to account for wicked waste of time. High civilization was represented by an admirable cook and a grand piano. Even philosophers are more serene when they have dined judiciously, and all the Heathcotes were musical.

A curious faithful record of many pleasant seasons at Whitcliffe exists in a plain grey-paper volume that is much treasured in the family—a volume so valuable that Mr. Heathcote gives it to be understood that it is the subject of a clause in his will. Less interesting relics are, in fact, laid up in many national collections. Its leaves are illustrated with grotesque etchings done on scraps of all sorts, shapes, and sizes: the handiwork of a guest so constant at the Grange House in August and September, that the chamber on the wall where he was remotely lodged because of his passionate

affection for nocturnal pipes, was held sacred to him, and is memorable still as 'Poor Burley's den.' At his first visit he was a young man of fine talent and liberal education, born to a good estate which he had lately lost; stranded suddenly on the barren rocks of poverty, and condemned to work for his bread. Misfortune was his original title to Mr. Heathcote's kindness. He was asked to come down to Whitcliffe for breathing-time while it was under consideration how he should work; and he proved such capital company, in spite of disaster, that he was elected on the list of annual visitors who *must* come, let who would stay away. He aspired to be an artist, and his theories of art were noble. But his pen and pencil bits were very funny. A cheerful philosopher he was, and spent his afternoons mostly smoking, and reading novels of marvellous adventure up in the fork of the giant pear-tree at the end of the long-turfed walk that runs down the middle of the Grange garden: the favourite walk, where roses, sweet-peas, and mignonette made then as now, a fragrant border within a hedge of cankered, gnarled espaliers. It was a safe advantageous roost, also, for multiplying those quaint, queer studies from life which he dropt about so heedlessly, which Mrs. Heathcote kept watch for, gathered up, laughed over with her husband, and hid away to save offence. Joe Burley had no respect of persons, and would caricature his reverence the parish clerk, or his wisdom Job Clive, with as frank and free a pencil as he would quiz his particular little friend Katie. And people look so variously on being quizzed. Job Clive would not have appreciated it at all kindly; Katie regarded it as most excellent fooling. The pictorial waifs and strays that Mrs. Heathcote collected and arranged in the grey-paper book long after date, are precious now beyond money's-worth, because, though Burley did not flourish as an artist, he made his mark on the world in another way, and stood a good head taller than any of his contemporaries in the literary walk that he adopted.

But the happiest days at the Grange House were before Burley became so great and famous; while the elders had still many conclusions to try with the world, and the young folks had all their troubles before them.

Arthur Bayard was the one of most marked character. Under an extreme gentleness of demeanour he possessed an invincible will,

courage and steadfastness: great qualities and great abilities. He was very tall and lean, with eyes extraordinarily bright, and a beautiful countenance. Everbody loved him, but never, perhaps, was any lad more unmercifully laughed at by his friends. He was so sublime that he verged perpetually on the ridiculous. He figures on the initial page of the grey-paper scrap-book as Don Quixote, junior, in pattens and a huge helmet, running a tilt at a paper kite. His lance is through it, and an undignified somersault is the consequence of no resistance to his mighty lunge. This is written under: 'He would be a reformer.' Ruefully beholding his catastrophe, and shedding tears as big as peas, is a droll small image which commemorates Katie Heathcote, in brief frilled frock, goloshes and prodigious cotton sun-bonnet, just as she used to be sent into the garden to play by herself all those years ago: just as Burley's big spectacles in the pear-tree must have shown her to him scores of times.

Mrs. Heathcote laughed till the tears ran over her eyes at this faithful absurd view of her pretty Katie, and perceived that the hour was come to add another frill to her petticoat. Katie was twelve then, and Arthur eighteen. From this episode of their comic-etched biography, both had already taken up the line which they have since pursued, consistently, unfalteringly, as their mission in the world. Already Arthur's sour enthusiasm was commented on with jesting humour; already his fierce crusade against bad customs grown strong, and kept as laws, had led him to discomfiture. And already Katie had asserted that, whoever lost faith and patience, her sweet sympathy was his for ever.

The time went on. A double first crowned Arthur Bayard's blameless career at Oxford, and a proud and happy man was Sir Francis that day his son arrived at the Grange House with all his blushing honours new upon him.

Somebody else was proud and happy too. Katie Heathcote watched for Arthur's coming as an affectionate young woman ought to watch for the coming of her constant lover. Burley espied her at her window under the fragrant festoons of clematis, looking out long before the time. 'Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' is the query he gives to her impatience in the scrap-book, where he draws her jocund face with a shade of melancholy. Overleaf is the chariot, much too small for the conquering hero, whose be-laurelled head

brushes the sky; a meagre Rosinante stumbles in the shafts, and a plump cherub whips and spurs as postillion; but the triumphal way is encumbered with mountains of kettles to mend, and Katie appears a mere speck at her window in the furthest distance. This cruel quip has for legend: 'Means and Ends.' It must have got out of its place in the collection, or Burley was a truer seer than the rest, for it did not enter into anybody else's reckoning *then* how late and long it would be ere Arthur reached the goal of his fond hopes.

Nor into his own. He was full of health and spirits; it was impossible to have brighter anticipations than he at the opening of life. And all belonging to him shared them.

That was a memorable holiday; happy, but dashed with sad sentiment, because of impending changes. It was the last time the two families met all together under the roof of the Grange House—indeed, they have never met anywhere all together since. The day must come when the young birds take wing into the world, and find them perches remote from the old nest. Frank Heathcote, a promising officer of engineers, was under orders for India; Loftus had a fortnight's leave before joining his ship for a three years' cruise; Lambert, who was born for a country gentleman, and was learning practical farming in Scotland for his vocation, came south to meet them; and Jasper, the only book-worm amongst the brothers, arrived from Oxford when Arthur Bayard did. Tristram remained still with his parents. He was delicate, fanciful, and desultory; a slighter copy of his father, with all his loving kindness, and much of his literary taste. He and Katie were great allies, being nearest in age to one another, and fellow-students at home under various masters, for Tristram was never considered strong enough to rough it at school, and Mrs. Heathcote was pleased to direct the education of her daughter herself. The result was very charming, if not so brilliant as the Paris accomplishment of Olive and Winny Bayard, who came on the scene young ladies of high consequence, being both under bonds to marry in the spring. Their prospective lords were of the company; but, besides these gentlemen, no one, not akin to either family, was at the Grange House that season, except Burley.

They wanted no one else; they had all the elements of happiness amongst themselves. How often have they reverted to that holiday since as an epoch, when life before them appeared without a cloud!

That the soldier and sailor should go their way to the world's end, was as much in the course of nature as that Olive and Winny should be preparing their joy apart from father and mother. Arthur's sisters were good, intelligent girls, rather patronising to Katie as home-bred and younger than they, but quite satisfied with her as their brother's choice. Being more experienced, they kindly tried to improve her style of dress, and to arrange her beautiful brown hair in the mode of Paris; but after several failures, they generously conceded that she looked best in her white muslins and blue ribbons, with her hair softly braided and knotted in her own simple easy manner. And Arthur pronounced her so perfect and sweet a lady, that she would dignify and grace the simplest cotton gown. He admired her pretty head with its air of distinction so exceedingly when they were young lovers, that to this day she has not changed her fashion of braiding and knotting her hair as he approved it then; and he, still beholding her with the tender enthusiasm of former years, regards it as of the true classical model, and does not care in the least that his dear Katie looks quite unlike anybody else. In his eyes she always did look unlike anybody else—infinitely fairer, brighter, more gentle, more loving.

There are no wonderful incidents to record of this last general gathering at the Grange House. It was a time of peace and pleasantness, and serene content. Sir Francis and his son used to start off every morning after breakfast for a great walk and talk, from which it was occasionally remarked that they came back grave and silent. But that might be the consequence of fatigue. Of an afternoon the garden was the common haunt, and Olive and Winny and their devoted patient lovers, engaged in croquet against Tristram and Loftus, and perhaps some young lady recruits staying in the village. Arthur Bayard did not care for croquet, and of course Katie did not care for it either; and while the others played they rested quietly in the rustic bower, half way down the long walk amidst the flowery fragrances of mignonette and sweet peas, Katie with some pretty finger-end work to do, and Arthur with some book out of which he probably read improving passages in the intervals of conversation. Now and then Sir Francis or Mr. Heathcote joined them, and presently there would come a call to early tea, after which ensued a dispersion until dinner. Dinner over, there was music with singing

in the drawing-room, open windows and twilight saunterings, and scent of cigars amongst the trees. And for a week, while the harvest-moon was in its glory, there were sails upon the sea, and watchings on the cliff, and a great deal that was perfectly monotonous, but perfectly delightful and satisfactory. Lady Bayard and Mrs. Heathcote esteemed themselves at this epoch the two happiest mothers in the world.

One evening on the cliff the village band gave a concert of music. Its brazen clangour was too loud, but the musicians kept good time, and, with a wide space of air between their familiar reiterated tunes, had a brilliant effect. Visitors promenaded on the grass, daylight declined, and the moon rose silver-splendid above the sea-horizon.

Burley had strayed down to the shore by himself, and there he paced, his hands in his pockets, a pipe in his mouth, and solemn meditation on his brow. He was always a philosopher, but philosophy had not made him proof against a very tender sentiment for Katie Heathcote. It was a foolish romance, and he would have bitten out his tongue rather than speak a word to disturb her white conscience, but he nourished his manly love with kind thoughts of her—keeping it pure and holy as with myrrh and aloes, sweet and bitter, precious embalming spices.

By-and-by, as he paced and as he mused, he saw a troop coming towards him. It was all the young people, intent on boats: they would fill two boats, and they were going to row up the rippled, shining water-way to the moon—thus Katie announced, inviting him to be of her party. Before the boats were run out, the elders had arrived, and soon they were all on the sea. The strains of the band were lost in the distance, and they sang a gay song and chorus without one silent voice.

Opposite to Burley sat Arthur and Katie, her hand lying in his, still as a rose-leaf. The light fell full on their two beautiful faces, rapt and exalted with sweet, intense emotion. There was a hush at the end of the song: no sound but the dipping of the oars, and the rustle of the fine shingle that the flowing tide washed to and fro. They did not row up to the moon, but, by their eyes of blessed content, they had surely a vision of earthly paradise, a vision not too far off, and all bright with the illumination of fair love.

'Katie is happy,' whispered her mother; 'I am glad that my

daughter has chosen her part so bravely. Warm, true affection, dear, is the strength and joy of life!'

Only Katie heard, and Arthur, who covered her confiding little hand with his other hand as their lustrous glances mingled. Burley looked away. He could not be a spy on their tender trustfulness, but he could and did invoke heaven's favour and blessing on them both.

'Chosen her part so bravely,' said Katie's mother.

After-thoughts in affairs of the heart are not of much account. Arthur and Katie had grown unconsciously into love, and there was never any wish to deny or divide them. Yet their engagement was not wise from a worldly point of view. Olive and Winny Bayard were mateing themselves with gentlemen of mature years and established professional reputation; while Arthur had his way to make, and even his vocation to select. They were young enough to wait, their friends said, but long waiting and the sickness of hope deferred are, by common consent, a weary charge upon life. Neither realised it yet, however, and they entered on their first seven years of labour and patience with the faith of Jacob and his beloved Rachel.

Arthur Bayard had his peculiarities—that is understood. Katie was dear to him as woman could be, but he did not consider of a sweet wife as the be-all and end-all of a man's existence. He had ambition: not the ambition that aims at high promotion, but the ambition that aims at doing some excellent work in the world, by which a man's name may be remembered. He was sure to make mistakes from the very loftiness and largeness of his views, but he had an active conscientiousness that would ever stay him from going wilfully or far wrong.

In the opinion of many sagacious persons, he began with a mistake. When he left Oxford he lapsed into idleness and eccentricity: so his father said, not without bitterness and contempt. He fixed on the law as his profession, but he did not slave and toil as students do who mean to win the prizes of the law. To a successful, conspicuously-placed man of the world, like Sir Francis Bayard, it was keenly vexatious to have an only son of remarkable early achievement who would go out of his way *not* to prosper. Sir Francis was proud, and could not stomach that his son should end as a second-rate man. Mr. Heathcote had more confidence in Arthur. Arthur

did not make honour his object, but his old friend prophesied persistently that he would come to honour, and deserve it. Burley was oracular to the same effect, with a clause additional—that he would come to grief often by the way.

And the ladies of his family? They were submissive women, who did not presume to have any opinions adverse to their head. When Sir Francis impatiently deplored that his son was throwing himself away, Lady Bayard looked mournful, and confessed it was a pity. When Arthur talked with moving eloquence of the sins and sorrows of the poor in great cities, her mild eyes filled with tears, his sisters sighed that it was very sad; but all inquired in pleading tones whether there were not good, benevolent people enough in the lanes and alleys already to help them without him.

Apparently Arthur thought that there were not; for the second winter after he left Oxford, he threw to the winds the study of the law, quitted his father's house, and went into lodgings in the east of London. This was one of his exaggerated sudden movements that gave a touch of the absurd to his conduct in the estimation of sober-minded people who were not in sympathy with him. Sir Francis did not condescend to remonstrate. For some time past a coldness had been growing up between himself and his son. At his majority Arthur had entered into possession of a modest independence, just sufficient to release him from the necessity of following any laborious pursuit, if he could be content with daily bread. Probably content was made easy to him amidst the sordid miseries that it was his endeavour to ameliorate; for he never lost his look of bright-eyed courage, or breathed a word of regret for what he had done, of doubt or pity of himself for what he had foregone. In fact, he spoke less and less of himself and of his work at each visit home. The silence with which any communication respecting either was received discouraged confidence. For seven years he lived this life of voluntary self-denial and self-suppression, until, if his own people were inquired of what he was about, they could and did answer with implicit truth that they had not the slightest idea. There were other persons, however, who made it their business to be well-informed—notably Burley and Mr. Heathcote, his staunch friends in all sorts of weather.

Throughout this period Arthur still continued to go down to the Grange House every summer for the family gathering, but the want

of ease and cordiality in his father's reception of him, and a mortifying sense of being misunderstood and depreciated, quite destroyed the charm of their intercourse. The chagrin and disappointment of Sir Francis increased rather than diminished. A man here and there talked to him of his son as a noble fellow, but the majority adopted plaintive accents of wondering compassion at his vagaries; or, more kindly, refrained from all allusion to them.

Katie Heathcote, loving, peace-making Katie, kept friends with both father and son. It was the greatest comfort Sir Francis had when in town to spend a Sunday afternoon at the old house in Cheyne Walk where the Heathcotes lived, prosing with Katie about Arthur; for he dearly loved his son, in spite of what he felt to be a just resentment at his follies.

Katie counted Arthur's letters by scores, and was deep in his secrets, but without leave to communicate any. He had taken to journalism, to venting his views of reform in any newspaper that would grant him a hearing as a writer without a name. He began obscurely, but he crept on. One famous morning an eloquent protest of his adorned the columns of a great review. Readers of that paper soon learnt to recognise his method, and to turn the leaves over in quest of his articles. They were not frequent, but they were full of matter, well-considered and in admirable taste. They appealed to the highest principles and finest emotions of men (in that they were out of the fashion), but there are always a few unfashionable people in the world, a fit audience for unfashionable views. And even amongst the earthly and sensual they found some to approve—the most self-indulgent are occasionally thankful for a reminder that they are not swine, created to wallow always in the mire. The writer began to be known as the man who preached a revival of ancient wisdom, and the necessity of a more simple, personal and practical adoption of the Christian philosophy, morality and charity, if this nation would be saved from the perils of its excessive corrupt wealth, and instructed how to remove the menace of its excessive corrupt indigence.

Arthur revealed the secret of these essays to no one but his dear Katie. Their literary success took him by surprise. He had put forth what was making thousands think—would there be any adequate result of their thinking? For that he cared much more than for any

praise or reputation they might bring him. Katie had many an impulsive longing to tell Sir Francis how his son, who vext his soul every day, was reaping honourable profit of his labours already; but loyalty to Arthur tied her tongue. 'Some day,' said Arthur, 'I will tell him myself—it is not a profit that he would appreciate as you do. I must achieve a more tangible dignity than that of authorship to satisfy my father.'

This was his reply to a gentle solicitation of Katie's on the eve of the annual migration to Whitcliffe. She was sorry, but she acquiesced in his decision without raising another plea.

And now see the cross-purposes of life, when men, by gradual alienation, have given them the advantage!

That year Sir Francis Bayard arrived at the Grange House with a heart inclined towards his son, and he had not been five minutes under its roof before he learnt, by the answers given to his wife's inquiries, that Arthur was not coming down to meet them as usual. He said nothing of his disappointment, but he felt it keenly. The comment of their old friends on the occasion was that Sir Francis and his son grew shy of one another, and it was a grievous pity.

In the evening Sir Francis invited Katie to a walk. They went out across the fields behind the church, and so to the top of the down where all was silence, and below them a sea of beauty. Years, anxious toil, and hidden care, were telling on Sir Francis. His visage was lined and grey, and his hair was almost white. On their road they met a troop of masons and labourers going home; men of healthful faces and easy athletic frames.

'To labour and be content with what a man hath is a sweet life!' quoth Sir Francis, with a vast sigh.

'We are prosperous at Whitcliffe, and not too thick upon the ground yet,' said Katie. 'I have often thought from their faces how much easier must be the vocation of the handicraftsmen than the vocation of those who are over them.'

'No men work harder or put more conscience into their work than the governing classes in England at the present day,' rejoined Sir Francis. 'They are considerate, too, as men of counsel must be—I wish them a little steadier courage only. The times require it, and here, in England, the general community understand the duties of

citizenship so thoroughly that they might be trusted to strengthen the hands of upright rulers against the spread of moral plagues. A few black spots are discernible amongst us which elsewhere have been portents of national decay. We know what malignant disorders they reveal; but the canker has not yet eaten too deep for the sharp remedy of excision—if we have the pluck and patience to bear it.'

Sir Francis spoke with fire and energy. Katie was interested in such high matters because they were Arthur's interest. She listened, curiously moved, as Sir Francis went on: 'Arthur imagines that sweet philanthropy is the medicine to heal the age of its sicknesses. I could tell him that the more immediate necessity is for a clean, prompt cutting away of the license that a few impudent quacks have taken to upset the dicta of authority. We call ourselves a law-abiding people, and yet we suffer the unruly multitude to defy the law. We call ourselves a Christian people, and yet we suffer that fools who have grown bold in their private assurance that there is no God, should stand in the open places of the city, preaching sedition and blasphemy. Their impunity instructs others that the law is no terror to evil-doers. I should like to resuscitate a little of the puritan discipline in favour of these brazen demagogues, of whom we grow too tolerant by half. We are hardly advanced enough for safe government by paradox.'

Katie smiled, a bright intelligent smile. She thought she had heard these sentiments before. Sir Francis was, indeed, quoting freely from a recent essay of his son's: an essay to declare for the ten thousandth time that truism not yet taken for understood—True liberty consists in voluntary obedience to just laws. Sir Francis discerned the meaning in her eyes; paused with a sudden thought, a sudden pang.

'You are a reader, Katie—you know that voice crying in the wilderness, which I only echo—whose is it?' he said.

Katie was confused, and did not speak; but her too rosy cheek was tantamount to a confession.

Sir Francis continued, as if he did not regard it: 'I have often said to my Mary that if our Arthur had not been so careless of the vantage-ground position gives to a man, he might have done some valuable work. For he has high purposes, and the courage of his opinions. He would die for them as readily as any of the old martyrs.'

'I am sure he would!' cried Katie, with tender enthusiasm. 'But he will not need to die; he will live to make many proselytes! I know that you love him, Sir Francis, for the very heroism you carp at.'

'Is he heroic? He rushes at sturdy evils as if by main force he could uproot them, and nine times in ten his labour is lost.'

'Only for the hour. He has given the sturdy evils a wrench; henceforward they are no longer so strong in the ground.'

'His sense of proportion is weak. He forgets that God's justice ripens slowly; and that, meanwhile, we have to live in the world as it is. Everything must have time to grow.'

'Arthur is always learning. He has gone to school for experience, and knows what he talks of.'

'He is sincere, and he believes in himself, which is always a power. Then, as I said before, he has courage. He does not flatter any class at the expense of another, but bemoralizes all with equal candour. It *will* be better for the commonwealth when thoroughness of work is the rule, and not the exception; when none but competent men are promoted; and all the world does right—but these are platitudes.'

Katie was blushing Arthur's betrayal furiously: she was convinced that his secrets had escaped into his father's keeping. Sir Francis did not tell her whether it were so, and they paced onward for some minutes in silence. The sun was setting, and all the sky was flooded with rosy lights. It was time to retrace their steps.

'Why is not Arthur coming to meet us this summer?' Sir Francis asked, when they had turned towards home. Katie could not say why; he had given no reason to any one. 'He should be more open with us,' Sir Francis went on. 'I don't know how it has come about, but we live in complete isolation from one another. His mother frets often, and complains that we might as well have no son. When will you bring him back to us, Katie? You have influence with him still.'

To this Katie answered nothing—what could she answer, to be at once kind and true? Sir Francis had let his own influence with his son lapse away, and now he regretted it. He had no other son to fill the place from which Arthur had been ejected. Arthur was a grief to his pride; but such as he was, prodigal and unrepentant still, his father would now have consented to call him home.

When they reached the house everybody was in the garden. It was a soft, warm, odorous night, safe to be enjoyed out of doors.

The rector was there, in conversation with Mr. Heathcote; but when Sir Francis appeared, he instantly began to ask for Arthur, of whom he was a faithful partisan.

'You probably know his whereabouts and his occupation better than myself, Greswold, for his occupation is more in your way,' was the answer. 'I did not seek him before leaving town; I expected to find him here, and they tell me he is not coming.'

'Nor will my boy take a holiday out of London this year,' was the rector's rejoinder. 'He must stay at his post—they all must. The fever is becoming epidemic, you see; prolonged distress amongst the working poor always breeds this famine-fever.'

There was a momentary hush, and then an audible sigh. Arthur had not cared to afflict his friends with useless anxiety for him; there he was, in the midst of danger—of not unaccustomed danger.

'It is heart-breaking to think of!' cried the country parson with impulsive, startling energy. 'We must have alms-giving for the necessitous, but I do protest with all my soul and conscience against systematic conversion into poor destitute folk of able-bodied men, women, and children. I am credibly informed that while work is at a standstill in some of the northern towns for want of hands, lazy-bones in London live on charity and doles. It ought not to be. The poor thriftless should be made to work. If a man will not work, neither let him eat—that is good morals and good policy too.'

If the ladies had not recognised a quotation from Scripture, they would have felt that Mr. Greswold was too harsh.

'I honour laborious work,' quoth Burley, who had entered on the scene with his inevitable perfume of tobacco. 'Laborious workers are cramped in this island. It is theirs to maintain the state of the world. Every expedient for helping men fails in the long run except that of setting them to help themselves.'

Is Burley also amongst the political economists?' softly exclaimed Sir Francis, and was answered by a universal laugh.

Burley is indeed amongst the political economists. Hear the correct card of his political faith:—General progress of the nation guaranteed under three heads: discipline, task-work, sunshine. To this wise and learned company I commit the interpretation of my watchwords.'

'Burley demands discipline! Has Arthur made a convert of him also?' said Mr. Heathcote gaily.

The effort to divert the painful sensation created by Mr. Greswold's information why his son and Arthur Bayard were kept in town, was partially successful. Lady Bayard went away sorrowful, but Katie comforted her with an assurance that Arthur's peril was no greater than it had been at any other time since he had lived and slaved amongst the London poor.

'He is in God's hands,' said the good girl. 'If I had not that consolation, I don't know how I should get through the days.' The next morning Katie was crossing the hall to go up-stairs, after a long saunter in the garden with her father, when she met Sir Francis coming down with a sheaf of papers in his hand. She knew at a glance what they were, and blushed in her tell-tale fashion. Sir Francis arrested her for a moment, and, parting the leaves, let her see certain articles enriched with marginal notes.

'I did not wait to approve them until I heard whose they were,' said he, displaying his autograph in several places. 'I have been reading them over at leisure to my Mary. There are some very fine things in them, Katie. But why did not my boy give his old father the pleasure of sharing his success?'

'Give him the pleasure of knowing that you are pleased with it, Sir Francis, and he will keep no more such secrets from you,' rejoined Katie with a gay heart.

'I am pleased. It is honourable success as far as it goes, and it will lead further.'

The restoration of a good understanding between Sir Francis Bayard and his son was the firstfruit of his discovery; a gain of happiness to both in which nobody rejoiced more than Katie. Arthur did not come to the Grange House, though he was much entreated; but when his parents returned to London in October, he was obedient to their every call; and the secret of his authorship once out, was soon the property of all their circle. Burley claimed to have known it from the beginning, as also did Katie's brother Tristram. Mr. Heathcote was content to say with pardonable triumph that he had always foreseen Arthur's honour and glory; and the sagacious persons who had doubted his solid capabilities in sight of his crotchets, now declared him to be a rising young man.

A rising young man, and he was close upon thirty.

The constant lovers had entered now on their second seven years

of probation. Arthur had a fit of recklessness at the beginning of this term, when, if Sir Francis had not vehemently remonstrated, or if Katie had not been averse to causing a fresh breach, he would have plunged into the cares and expenses of a family without any adequate means of maintaining it.

Essays, though ever so beautiful and true, can hardly enrich a man, and besides what his pen earned him Arthur had nothing but that very minute inheritance on which he had lived, and given alms to an extent that only One knew. And Katie had nothing either except a sandy, stony, up-and-down field, commanding an exquisite view seaward and landward at Whitcliffe; a ten-acre piece, the rent of which was barely sufficient for the annual renovation of her modest wardrobe. They were two poor young people, with a vast unrealized fortune in hopes and expectations; a diet that suffices for lovers, but not substantial enough to fill the large mouth that a homely proverb ascribes to a very small house.

It was that intensely sagacious person Job Clive who flashed the first gleam of certainty upon their vague prospects.

One glittering morning Katie started off to her field after breakfast to breathe the sea air, and refresh her eyes with the sea foam. She was just come from London with her father and mother. Job had a few sheep on the down, and the droughty season had left them scarcely a nibble of grass on the shallow soil.

'It is poor land, poor land all hereabouts,' quoth Job, 'good for nought much unless it be building.'

'Building!' cried Katie in dismay.

'Nobody couldn't build here without master's leave; but it might be worth while if he thought of it. Sheep cares nought for beauty, and building land at Brooklyn, no better nor this, lets for thirty pounds an acre, that ain't worth thirty shillings, no, nor thirty pence, for farming.'

Katie repeated her rural sentiment, and for an hour was indignant at the suggested invasion of her precious private rights. But as the day wore on her indignation wore off, and that evening at dinner she communicated to her father Job Clive's remark. Mr. Heathcote's views were as little speculative as Katie's own, and he pooh-poohed the notion of building at Whitcliffe—that pretty secluded nook, known to so few strangers, dear to so many friends. But Mrs.

Heathcote had a serious arithmetical turn, and she proceeded to calculate that Katie's ten acres, at Job Clive's valuation, would give her a fortune of three hundred a year. And then she announced the result. Katie and her father laughed at this jump to so handsome a conclusion; but they all must have thought of it more or less, for on the arrival of Burley and Tristram a week later, it was mentioned again.

Burley, sudden and sanguine as his kind hostess, was instantly inspired to prophecy in pen and ink. He sketched two views of Katie's field: 'As it is' and 'As it is to be;' there they are, in the grey-paper volume at this day, to vindicate his character as oracle.

But Whitcliffe was not built in a day. Its progress kept almost even pace with Arthur's progress; and like his, after a first promising success, came to a dead halt. One half-acre plot was taken, and a pretty cottage of gentility was built; and there, for three years, it stood in single sorrow, with none other to keep it company; speculators preferred easier ground, a quarter of a mile away, to Katie's stony field and lovely prospects. She had to wait for enterprising devotees of the picturesque.

Arthur's pause followed very quickly on the revelation that he was the author of those remarkable essays. Perhaps their mystery magnified their charm. Their novelty wore off, and they ceased to be talked of. Every day in London brings some new thing. It was a very new thing, and a surprise of the most painful sort to his friends, when Arthur was virulently attacked in a cheap, popular print, as the last, worst specimen of the wolf in sheep's clothing; a mock philanthropist.

It is not always a disadvantage to be well abused, but it is rarely pleasant. Katie shed tears over her lover's plundered fame, and his father counselled a dignified silence. But Arthur was naturally full of fight, and being irritated, he set his teeth hard, and prepared to defy the enemy. At a democratic meeting, where shouting was good argument, and a red flag a type of its quality, he had the venturesomeness to present himself on the platform; and when the red flag was insolently fluttered within an inch of his nose, his sudden fury gave him the force to snatch it away, and tear it to tatters. And then he stood up, his face to the foe, fierce and plucky, ready and willing to strike out from the shoulder if the foe gave him occasion.

He had not forgotten his athletic Oxford training, and there was gumption enough in the motley crowd to respect his courage. Instead of blows and curses they gave him a ringing cheer for his manliness, and even listened with patience to a passionate speech, very different from the speeches they came to hear.

And Arthur Bayard had the laugh on his side again, when 'Pasquin,' that bold shrewd censor of public morals, made him figure in a cartoon as little David, with his sling and a stone, bringing down the big boastful Goliath—admirable portraits both, and soon to be familiar to the people who read contemporary history as they run by the news-shop windows. Katie was charmed with 'Pasquin' for this—David was a most graceful, beautiful young hero. Perhaps she was not so charmed when her lover appeared a few weeks later as a grim-visaged prize-fighter stripped for the battle. But it was equally true. Arthur had begun to feel that he was a muscular Christian, capable of harder work than any he had done yet.

'It is a thankless life,' Sir Francis often said; 'he must regret that he has no profession.'

But Arthur did not regret it. Other prospects, other views, were opening before him. If rotten boroughs had been still in existence, there were two statesmen—men of nobility and great landed estate—who would have offered this rising young man a seat in the House of Commons. Rotten boroughs being out of date, it became necessary to find him an entrance into Parliament another way. This other way was found, and Arthur Bayard was privileged to write himself M.P. for Ironstone.

Then was the pride of Sir Francis satisfied. 'Arthur has done well for himself. He has the master-key, and may go where he will.' And Arthur returned to his father's house, but did not remit his business in the dismal city altogether to other hands.

The new member's first session was a very anxious, arduous, trying time. He was late and early—one of the most diligent, laborious men, in the House. He had raised some expectations, and he disappointed none. He was serving his apprenticeship to statecraft; and on the rare occasions when he spoke, it was modestly, as before his elders, but intelligently, and close to the purpose. He braved no adverse opinion with loud eloquence; cold logic was his weapon, and the best of his audience were convinced, by his masterly use of

it, that any cause he might add his strength to would be likely to win. His character was soon made as an independent member.

When a member lays himself out for work, more than enough is sure to be put upon him. Arthur Bayard never spared himself, and he showed it in his face. For a dozen years he had worked, and not spared himself. That summer was intensely hot, and Westminster is not an airy cool place when the weather is sultry and stifling out of the thick of town. On the Sunday afternoon he came to Cheyne Walk, to be refreshed by the presence of Katie and any breeze that might be straying about Chelsea. The two used to sit in placid content at an open window overlooking the river, hearing and telling the news of the week with lively detail. Nothing was too trivial that concerned the one to interest the other. If it were possible, their love increased—what old lovers they were, and how unromantic, said foolish young creatures who did not understand any phase of love but its first rosy, enchanting blush. They were not at all unromantic nor unsentimental. There was not a fairer, sweeter woman in the world than Katie Heathcote to Arthur's eyes; and to hers, not a better, nobler man, than Arthur Bayard.

By general consent the Heathcotes stayed in town that year until Parliament rose; then Arthur started on a tour of visits—to his constituents first, and after that to the grand houses of his chiefs, and of other persons of distinction. He was a man to be liked, to be courted even, but never to be spoilt. Katie had grieved a little at going down to Whitcliffe without him, but he wrote to her every day; and one Saturday, a full week earlier than she had ventured to expect him, he arrived without forewarning at the Grange House. Then was Katie happy indeed; for he showed her that no work, nor ambition, nor society, satisfied his heart long without her.

'I wish we could be always together, Katie; then you would be rest—now you are distraction,' was his way of putting it. 'When are we to begin the world like other brave young people? We are of age to judge for ourselves.'

'Prudence, Arthur, prudence!' said Katie, with as pretty a smile and blush as illumined her face at eighteen; and prudence still carried the day, Sir Francis being still its advocate.

'With so much patience they ought to have patriarchal length of days,' said Mrs. Heathcote to her husband, with sad discontent.

Mr. Heathcote bade his dear wife be reasonable. What would she have them do? Arthur had no home, unless in his father's house, and no means of making a sufficient home for Katie. Did her mother wish Katie to go to Sir Francis Bayard's, Sir Francis not desiring it? No, her mother did not wish that, but— But what? Did she fear any inconstancy on Arthur's part? No! Arthur was an honourable man.

'And Sir Francis is an honourable man,' rejoined Mr. Heathcote.

'Sir Francis loves successful people, and we are obscure. He is vext in his heart at the lingering engagement that, perhaps, hinders his son of a greater match.'

'Who told you so, my dear? I take leave to treat that as a little caprice of your imagination. Sir Francis is much attached to our Katie.'

'No one can know her, and not love her! But it does not follow that he is as satisfied with her for Arthur's wife as he was once. If he were anxious to forward their marriage, his income is enough for it—but he gives his son no independent allowance to enable him to marry. Arthur might do better—his sister Olive has said it, and said they *all* thought it.'

'Except Arthur—Arthur does not think it, I am very sure. And it is nothing new that there should be grave differences of opinion between himself and his family.'

'I wish they were married!' was Mrs. Heathcote's response, and she sighed from the depths of her motherly heart.

There was a daughter at Stanmore, where Arthur Bayard had been on a visit that autumn—the Lady Cecilia. She was presented the following season, and was called one of its beauties. Arthur Bayard stood on friendly terms with her family, on terms of intimacy almost. Lady Cecilia was an amiable girl, and well brought up. It was natural she should approve the gentleman whose praise was so often in her father's mouth, and towards the end of the season there was a rumour that this rising young man might take, if he pleased, a very long step up the ladder of social promotion, and that the temptation would be too strong for his virtue.

'Nay,' said Burley stoutly, between two puffs of his pipe, 'Bayard will marry his old love. That little girl could be nothing to him,

unless it were a plaything, and Bayard does not care for playthings. Katherine Heathcote has his heart, God bless her.'

'The lady is your romantic ideal, old fellow,' was the rallying rejoinder.

'I have known her since she was no higher than this,' said Burley, lifting one hand to the level of Katie's crown when she was still in scant petticoats, when he made fancy pictures of her, and she pelted him with cherries on his perch in the pear-tree. He restored his pipe to his mouth, and said no more after that.

Sir Francis Bayard was an honourable man, but he was a craving man. It is certain that he desired a higher match for his son than dear Katie Heathcote. The rumour that gave Lady Cecilia to his son was sweet to his ears; and though his habit of truth compelled him to disclaim it, wherever he heard it, still he could not bring his mind to promote that other marriage which must for ever bar the hope of a nobler alliance. The Grange House was left to itself that year, on a sudden proposal of Mr. Heathcote to his wife that they should go abroad instead of to Whitcliffe. Katie consented cheerfully, though Arthur told her that he could not be of their party. He was due at Stanmore and at other great houses of the Stanmore connection.

'Good-bye, my love,' said Katie, 'be happy.' And she went away and was happy too. She had not one doubt of Arthur.

The Heathcotes went to Lucerne, and there sat down. It did not enter into their scheme of pleasure to be always in movement, and six at least of Katie's letters were dated from a delicious balcony that overhung a garden sloping to the lake. They had made a little home there, she said, and oh it was so beautiful! Arthur figured to himself that little home, with its blue mirror of waters, its garland and its flowers, and Katie the sunshine of it. He was at Stanmore, in the midst of the pomps and vanities of most noble life, and he wished himself with Katie at Lucerne. He wanted to tell Katie that he loved her, and loved nothing so well. Stanmore was very magnificent, but Katie was not there, and its magnificence was void.

Had he, by chance, suffered a disappointment? We will not go into that. It is ancient wisdom that disappointments must happen to those who desire, and falls occasionally to those who climb.

'My son is at Houghton Towers,' said Sir Francis Bayard one day

to a friend whom he met on the Steyne at Brighton, whither he and Lady Bayard had gone.

The friend betrayed surprise. 'Then it was his *double* I saw on Dover Pier last week, in full flight for the Continent.'

It was now the turn of Sir Francis to be surprised. He was greatly surprised. Arthur had followed Katie to Lucerne.

One balmy still afternoon, Katie was in her balcony, watching the pleasure-boats upon the lake. Tristram and her father were out there; her mother was lying down, tired with the morning's walk. Katie had a new book, but she had no mind to read. She gazed and dreamed, and was just a shade melancholy. There were moments when her life tried her a little—one of these moments was upon her now. The post had not brought her a letter that she expected; it was a trifle, it would come on the morrow, but even such a trifle as a delayed letter can sometimes depress the heart.

The mother called to her from within: 'Katie, are you there?'

'Yes, mamma; do you want me?'

'Only to know that you are there, dear. I heard a sigh.'

Katie was sighing then over her sad thoughts—not that they were so *very* sad; they were too loyal to Arthur for that. If he sometimes gave her pain, it was not wantonly. He was so busy, so absorbed with ever-increasing duties when in London, that she saw less of him than formerly, and now the associations these duties entailed were devouring his holiday. She prayed that he might not fall into that restless habit of so many public men, which leaves them without leisure or the desire of it. She believed that if she were at his hand she might help him—that she might cheer and strengthen him amidst the hindrances, vexations, and drawbacks which were likely to thicken on his path.

He was on his way to her while she indulged her sad reverie in the balcony. Mrs. Heathcote listened for a repetition of her sighing, but Katie was on her guard. Not for worlds would she have made her mother or any one else sorry on her account. The next sound the listener heard was an astonished, joyful cry: 'O you dear, good Arthur! Have you dropped from the clouds?' and the answer to it, in a voice as happy: 'I was sure of my welcome, Katie.'

'It is Arthur Bayard! How glad I am for my darling,' thought the anxious mother, rising to look out.

Katie had run down by the balcony steps, and was standing below

in the garden with her lover, both of them too excited for the moment to have much to say. Mrs. Heathcote returned to her couch, and left them to seek her when the rapture of meeting was over.

Katie said it was exquisitely kind of Arthur to have made this journey to see her; she was most loving and grateful.

Arthur answered her with laughing deprecation. 'It was in kindness to myself, and because of the blessed comfort you are to me. Nowhere else can I seek consolation with the sweet certainty of getting no hard words therewith. Yesterday I was in doleful dumps; now they are gone, banished by the light in Katie's eyes.'

'Thank God for you, my love! And what has grieved you?'

'It is not worth telling at all, now I am here and with you.'

. . . . . .

'I was afraid it would be so! That is Arthur all over. He must needs take up the unpopular quarrel!'

'I honour him for it. It is in a just cause.'

'He will lose his seat in the House. The very name of the thing drives dull people rabid. What do they care for justice?'

'All the more need that those who do care for justice should spend themselves in maintaining it.'

'There was no reason why he should make or meddle in the matter—he had only to be quiet.'

'Which it is impossible for Arthur Bayard to be, in the presence of a wrong that can be righted.'

This was the nearest approach to a serious difference that ever occurred between Sir Francis Bayard and his friend Mr. Heathcote. It happened in the second session of Arthur's parliamentary experiences—in March. For a month after they did not meet, and in the interval that had come to pass which Sir Francis had predicted, parliament had been dissolved, and Ironstone had made such violent manifestations of wrath against its representative, that at the election he did not go to the poll, but let his rival walk over the course. For a little while Arthur Bayard was one of the best abused men in the kingdom. Even 'Pasquin' made a mock of him as a player for high stakes, who had lost, and sat glooming with dark hang-dog face in his ruin.

Katie Heathcote bit her lip when she saw this. With tears in her eyes she wrote to her injured lover, sending him the warmest sympathy that could be expressed in words. No doubt it was very precious to him; and the sympathy of her house was almost all he

had. He met friends now whose looks were colder than formerly, whose shallow faith in him perished in this untimely frost. Burley spoke him kindly, but Sir Francis kept grim silence. Lady Bayard wept reproaches, and the husband of his sister Olive gravely proposed to him a question in the name of the whole family. Did he not think, as events had unfortunately turned, that it would be wise, though so late, to seek some calling in life by which to make money? Arthur replied that events were not his masters—and he had not yet given up the ambition to do better than make money.

A man may not be of too sensitive a fibre, and yet these things will sting. That Arthur Bayard felt them but a little is unlikely, for he was a man much beholden to affection for his happiness. He was often in Cheyne Walk, and he never went but he came away inspired. Perhaps this was why he and Katie chose the day of his adversity to marry in.

It was a positive shock to his father when he announced their resolve. 'Now you cap your follies!' cried Sir Francis in great anger; and he declared that the marriage should not be countenanced by his presence.

Perhaps, again, this blaze of displeasure was one reason why they were married at Whitcliffe instead of in London. Also Katie had often said that she should like to be married from the old Grange House.

The limes about the gates have blossomed and fallen many times since then, and Sir Francis has long ago revoked his harsh dictum that his son was capping his follies when he married Katie Heathcote. Fortune has approved his courage, and given him leave to prosper. Who does not know the name of Bayard now? What triumph has he had, what praises and honour of men! But he knows how these things change and pass away, and he sets his joy far above their ebb and flow. 'It is an easy thing for God to make a poor man rich.'

God has given Bayard wealth in unexpected ways. Katie's field is a garden full of cottages of gentility. The grey scrap-book has many incidents of the rise and progress of Whitcliffe, which are not written in this story. Its last record is of the fortunate day when Bayard married his Old Love.

HOLME LEE.

AFTER SOME YEARS.

Chapter I.

He was a Government clerk, and she was a fisherman's daughter: his name was John Carlton, and hers Lucy Jennings. He was tolerably good-looking, three-and-twenty years of age, of a romantic disposition, and had neither father nor mother. He first met Lucy down at Bargate, where her father plied his trade, and her mother let lodgings.

John had come down to Bargate for three weeks' sea air and some good bathing. It did not matter to him, so long as the rooms were clean and wholesome, whether they had a sea view or not, and as the price of the first floor in the little back street suited his pocket, and Mrs. Jennings seemed obliging, if rough, John took the apartments.

Lucy waited on her mother's lodgers, and the first time John saw her he was struck with her beauty, good-nature, and gentle appearance. Afterwards he saw her sitting under the cliffs reading most intently quite away from the crowd of people that daily gather on the sands. Day after day he strolled that way, of course quite accidentally, and she was always sitting in the same place, and always reading. He tried to talk with her, but she was too shy to do more than answer him. Then he took to lending her books, finding she liked nothing so much as reading.

'She's a'most too fond of it,' said the old fisherman one day, when John was talking to him. 'I've twice found her on that there favourite seat of hers—read, read, read—till the tide comes up all round, and I've had to fetch her off in my boat.'

'She brought me back my books to-day, saying she hadn't time to read them,' said John.

'Ay, her mother's been at her, poor wench. She says she reads and neglects her work,' said the old man.

'But it is a pity for a clever girl like Lucy to be made into a servant. Couldn't you send her to school?'

'Lor bless yer, sir; I did send her to learn reading and writing. She knows more nor her class a'ready, sir; and her mother says it only makes her waste her time; 'tain't as if she was a lady; but she's always worrying me to send her to school again.'

John pondered over what the old fisherman said, but he could not help thinking that it was a pity Lucy was not well taught. If she were educated now, she would grow up and equal in graceful beauty many ladies. His cousins, for instance, would not be able to approach her, either for cleverness or good looks. Two or three days passed, and Lucy was not to be found at her old haunt, nor did she bring up his tea, a slatternly maid-of-all-work performing that office. John began to miss her, and would have wondered where she was had he not often heard her mother's sharp voice scolding her. These scoldings had a powerful effect on John, and it was with difficulty he could prevent himself from rushing down-stairs, pouncing on Mrs. Jennings, and shaking her for daring to scold beautiful Lucy.

He wandered up and down the sands, thinking of Lucy, day after day. How he wished she were older, and in a different sphere of life, that he might make her his wife. At last he determined to educate her. It was true his salary was not large, and his rich uncle, whose heir he was to be, considering it sufficient for a single man, would allow him nothing. It certainly was sufficient for himself, but would it put Lucy to school? John thought, if he practised strict economy, it would. The old fisherman saw no reason to object to Lucy becoming a lady, and it was settled that she should go to the best school in Bargate.

All this happened in three weeks; and when John left the classic shores of Bargate for his usual routine in London, it seemed like a dream, except for the remembrance of Lucy's fair face, and the reality of the school bills coming due every quarter. Lucy did not know that John intended to marry her; she looked forward to going out as a governess, which had always been the height of her ambition; but she did know that John had put her to school, and in her gratitude and admiration made him a sort of hero, remembering and magnifying all the kind things he had said to her and done for her. She even magnified his personal appearance, thinking him one of the noblest, handsomest, and cleverest of men, and looking forward to seeing him with great eagerness.

While Lucy practised her scales and learnt her 'Magnall's Questions' in the little back parlour at Bargate, John plodded backwards and forwards, in all weathers, from the airy office to his dreary lodgings in Charlwood Street, Pimlico.

If John had no father nor mother, he had a host of uncles, aunts, and cousins, who wondered, and tried to find out, why John lived in cheap lodgings, and worked so hard that he never went out of town even in his yearly holiday. Why did he not spend his money on lavender kids and expensive cigars, like other young men in his position? Why did he refuse invitations to dinners, balls, and the opera —he who was to be the heir of rich old John Carlton, his godfather and uncle? John did not notice their hints nor satisfy their curiosity, but went plodding on, neither thinking of his health nor good looks, and both were suffering terribly from his solitary habits and over-work.

When nearly three years had passed, John went down to Bargate again, not telling them he was coming. The old fisherman and his wife were very pleased to see him, but Lucy scarcely knew him, he was so altered. John thought her ten times more beautiful, and she thought him positively plain. Was this her hero—this white-faced, thin-haired man, who had such a bad cough and looked as if he were in a consumption? Poor Lucy was disappointed; but in a few days, when he talked to her and read to her, taking her for long pleasant walks by the sounding sea, that brought a healthy flush into his cheeks, she began to think he was not so much changed after all.

John stayed a fortnight at Bargate; and before he left Lucy had promised to be his wife.

When the uncles, aunts, and cousins heard that he was engaged to a fisherman's daughter, they were loud in their displeasure. They talked and remonstrated, all to no purpose, and at last turned up their aristocratic noses, and shook the dust off their dresses and feet as John bowed them out of his door.

Old Mr. Carlton turned purple with rage, and vowed he would cut him off with a shilling. John shrugged his shoulders and said he might, which aggravated the old gentleman into such a fury that, in spite of the gout in his right foot, he jumped out of his chair, rang the bell, and ordered the footman to 'turn Mr. John Carlton out of the house and never to let him in again.'

John was entirely alone in the world now. His salary was not large

enough to keep a wife; so there was nothing for him to do but to work, hope, and wait. John did work, though the foggy days and cold damp nights brought back his cough, and he grew perceptibly thinner.

The principal at the office took an interest in him; he noticed how hard he worked, how ready he was to do any little kindness; and, besides, he had known and liked his father. Seeing how ill the young man had lately grown, he offered him a month's holiday. John thanked him, and said he could go on a little longer. Christmas passed, and early in February the principal came to him again, and insisted that he should go away for a time. 'It shall make no difference to you, Mr. Carlton; and pray take my advice, and go to some warm place, out of this foggy atmosphere, where you will be quiet and free from work.' John thanked him, and went to Bargate.

It was on the evening of her eighteenth birthday that John said to her, 'If I were to die, Lucy, would you be very sorry?'

'Oh, John! you will not die; don't think of anything so dreadful.'

'Would you think it very dreadful? Come here, my dear, and tell me, do you love me?' Lucy came and knelt down by his side.

'Perhaps I am too old and not good-looking enough,' said John. She did not contradict him.

'Lucy, do you love anyone else?' said he, grasping her hand and gazing eagerly in her eyes. She looked rather surprised, and said innocently, 'I have never seen anyone else to love; you are the only real gentleman I know.' John let go her hand and turned his head away from her. 'So you would not like to marry one of the young fishermen who come to see your father?' said he.

'Oh, no! no! I should be miserable,' she said vehemently.

'I have something to give you, Lucy—a present for your birthday,' said he, taking a box from under his pillow.

Lucy opened it, and saw a handsome locket and chain.

'How beautiful! and how good of you to give it me!'

'Look in the inside,' said John. Lucy opened it, and found it contained his miniature.

'It's very good, exactly like you,' said she, looking from the original to the portrait. 'Will you wear it, Lucy?' 'Oh yes, and I will never leave it off.'

'My darling,' said he; and, putting his arm round her, he whispered, 'Do you love me?'

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MUSEUM

'LONG PLEASANT WALKS BY THE SOUNDING SEA.'

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'Not so much as I ought, but I'll try to,' said she simply. John sighed; perhaps he expected too much.

The month had passed, and John, not any better, was back at his work again. The principal no sooner saw him than he sent him home, telling him he should not have come back. And this is not the only kindness he did; for, learning from John of the quarrel with his uncle, he wrote the latter such a letter that, though it made Mr. Carlton stamp with rage, it was also the cause of John's seeing a carriage stop at his lodgings, out of which stepped his uncle.

Mr. Carlton was a warm-hearted man with a very hot temper, which was continually leading him to say and do things he afterwards repented. He had long ago felt sorry for his hasty behaviour to John, but he was proud, and expected him to make the first advance. He came now, expecting to find his nephew's illness greatly exaggerated; wrung his hand with affection, and begged his pardon for his harshness.

Mrs. Carlton, who was the kindest, if the fussiest of women, insisted on his giving up his post, and coming and living with them till he was quite well; and so it came to pass that John left the small house in Pimlico for the large one in Belgrave Square, and from being a hard-working clerk became an interesting invalid.

Before many days had passed, John confided in his aunt and told her the whole story of his love for Lucy. The good romantic old lady thoroughly sympathised with him, and set too to work upon her husband to let Lucy come and stay with her. The old man stormed and raved as usual, but his wife took it very calmly.

'I see you mean to have your own way. Well! let the girl come; there's one comfort, I don't believe he'll ever be well enough to disgrace his family by marrying her.' Mrs. Carlton wrote at once to Lucy, and before many days had passed she made her first visit to London.

Before she had been with them three days, Mr. Carlton informed his nephew that she was 'the daintiest, prettiest, sweetest, and most beautiful girl he had seen since his youth.' John smiled at the sudden change, but quite agreed with him.

When the warm weather came, they went out for drives in the Park, and Lucy saw all the fashionable people. She went to the opera and the theatres; and when John grew much better, Lucy went out a great deal, and liked London very much.

The doctor had said that John Carlton was to go to a warmer

climate for two years if he wished to save his life, and he was to go before the winter came on. As the time of his leaving England drew nearer, John grew very melancholy. On the last night he said to her, 'Lucy, if I never come back——' 'But you will, John; the doctor says you will get quite strong,' cried she hurriedly.

'Listen to me. I may die, or I may be killed; no one knows what will happen; but in any case I have made my will, and left you everything I possess. It is not much—only what I insured my life for, but it will keep you from want; and, Lucy, if you marry, I hope you will be as happy as I should have tried to have made you.'

'Oh John, you are so good, I shall never be worthy of you,' said Lucy, with tears in her eyes; 'but,' she continued, vehemently, 'if I can't marry you, I'll never marry anybody.'

'Is that a promise, dearest?' asked John, his eyes shining brightly.

'Yes,' murmured Lucy, resting her head on his shoulder, and bursting into tears. John comforted her, and, his aunt coming in, he led Lucy to her, and said—

'Take care of her for me till I come back and claim her for my wife.'

Chapter II.

As soon as John had started for Italy, Mr. and Mrs. Carlton shut up their town house and retired into Sussex, taking Lucy with them.

A beautiful house, horses, carriages, books, music, and flowers; and yet Lucy found the country so dull that she often wished to be at home. Bargate was certainly 'deadly-lively' in the winter, but it was nothing to this place.

'There's not a cottage within a mile of us,' wrote Lucy to her father. 'We're four miles from the railway station, five from the village, and nothing but forest all round. We have to drive two miles to church, and the only families within visiting distance are the Sankeys and Meads. Mr. Sankey owns the most land, and is called the Squire; Mr. Mead is the clergyman. There are no young people, for Mr. Sankey's sons are out in the world, and he has only one daughter at home, who is seven-and-twenty, but looks ten years older. Mr. and Mrs. Mead are middle-aged, and have one son, who is out in India. There's a mystery about that son, for nobody speaks of him.'

Lucy went out in all weathers for the sake of something to do. One day, in December, as she was wandering listlessly through the forest, very much wishing John was at home, she met a young man, not dressed in fustian, but in broadcloth. Lucy stared at him, and he at her. Directly she reached home she described him to Mrs. Carlton.

'It was not Mr. Sankey nor Mr. Mead, but quite a young man, so good-looking, and such a swell!' said Lucy.

'I wonder whether it's Lionel Mead; but they'd surely never have him home again,' said Mrs. Carlton, shaking her head.

Lucy did not see the stranger again till Sunday, and then there he was in church; and in the Meads' pew. Lucy kept her eyes down on her Prayer-book, but every now and then she could not help raising them—the young man was so very handsome—much better looking than John, and a thousand times more good-looking than Mr. Morgan, the pale and putty-faced curate, whom all the girls had been in love with from sheer want of any other object.

The Rev. Josiah Morgan preached to a very inattentive audience that day. The young ladies did not say, as they usually did, 'How very eloquent he is! it is quite a treat to hear him;' but, on coming out of church they said, 'He is not very much altered; a little browner, perhaps, but that makes him look handsomer than ever,' and this sentence did not apply to Mr. Morgan.

Lucy, who had been looking forward all the service to an introduction in the churchyard, was disappointed; for Mr. and Mrs. Carlton hurried into their carriage, and the last thing Lucy saw, as they drove away, was Miss Sankey, in 'gorgeous array' standing at the church door, and talking to the handsome stranger. 'It is Lionel Mead,' were Mrs. Carlton's first words.

'Yes, the young puppy; he's always coming back like a bad shilling. It's not more than two years since he went to India.'

'Do you know what he's come back for?'

'Oh! had some little thing the matter, and has two years' sick leave,' replied Mr. Carlton.

The rest of the drive passed in silence. Lucy did not like to ask questions, though she had caught the country habit of wishing to know all about her neighbours; besides, there was a delightful mystery

about this young man that, coupled with his good looks and pretty name, quite charmed her. She longed, and hoped, and wished he would call, but the whole week passed and he never came. However, she felt sure he would be at church, and so she was rather more particular in the arrangement of her hair and bonnet. He was at church, and Lucy met his eyes fixed on hers with such a look of admiration that it caused her much embarrassment.

In the middle of the week, Mrs. Mead called to ask her to help her in the church decoration. She brought her son with her, and so Lucy was introduced to Captain Lionel Mead. Mr. and Mrs. Carlton were very polite, but they were not cordial, nor did they ask him to come and see them. However, Lucy met him at the Robinsons' and the Sankeys', and she had not been in his company more than half-a-dozen times before she thought him the most agreeable and charming man she had ever met.

'I can't think what he can have done to make Mr. and Mrs. Carlton so dislike him,' said Lucy, talking him over with her friend Miss Robinson, as they wandered through the lanes.

'Everybody was inclined to turn their back upon him before he went to India,' said Miss Robinson.

'But what for?' asked Lucy.

'His father and mother wanted him to take orders, but he would go into the army,' said Miss Robinson, coolly.

'You don't mean to say that everyone turned against him because he'd sooner be a soldier than a parson! Why, if I were a man, I'd sooner be a soldier,' said Lucy, vehemently. Miss Robinson looked at her lazily, but did not speak: she was a young lady who never said much, and never appeared surprised. If you had told her her mother was burnt to death, or remarked that it was raining, she would in all probability have said quietly, 'Indeed!'

'Did you hear what I said, Lizzy?' cried Lucy sharply.

'Yes, you said you'd rather be a soldier. Well, I don't know that I would,' drawled Miss Robinson softly.

'I said, was it because he was a soldier the people didn't like him?' said Lucy impatiently.

'Well, not exactly. I was young at the time, and don't remember very much about it, but I believe he gambled; and besides, he's such a dreadful flirt.' This was a very long sentence for Miss Robinson,

and so Lucy left her in peace for a little while, and walked thoughtfully along, plucking at the twigs in the hedge.

'Well,' she said at last, turning to her, 'is that all?' Lizzy nodded. It was too much trouble to speak.

'It wasn't so very bad after all, and I like soldiers,' said Lucy.

'I am very glad you do, Miss Jennings; it makes me hope I am not intruding,' said a voice, and through a gap in the hedge came Captain Mead. Lucy turned scarlet, and could not look in his face as she shook hands; but Miss Robinson held out her hand and appeared quite unmoved.

After that day Lucy was always meeting him. No matter where or when she walked, he met her; and so the winter turned into spring, and spring into summer, and Lucy's letters grew perceptibly cooler to John; so much so that he, noticing it, wrote playfully, 'I am afraid you are falling in love with somebody. Who have you found in those wilds? Is it Mr. Morgan, the curate?' Lucy knew he could have no suspicion, and yet this letter so troubled her that she avoided Captain Mead for a fortnight.

Down in Sussex, Lucy was known as Mr. and Mrs. Carlton's adopted niece, and everybody wondered who she was.

'It don't much matter who she is, or where she came from,' said Lionel Mead. 'All I know is, she is awfully pretty.'

'Indeed! Well I can't see it,' said Miss Sankey stiffly. She felt jealous of Lucy's beauty. She had known the Captain when he was in socks and pinafores, and had loved him from the time that he first appeared in trousers. Lionel was quite aware that he was beloved. He meant to marry Mary Sankey some day; for, if she was plain and scraggy, she had plenty of money, and, after all, that was of the most consequence. In the meantime, he dearly loved to tease her. So now he said, 'Ah, Mary! women's eyes are prejudiced against each other's charms.'

'Well, I dare say it's bad taste, but I don't admire coal-black hair and washed-out eyes,' said Miss Sankey.

'My dear Mary, they are the most divine shade of grey.'

'I'm not *your* dear,' snapped Mary.

'Unfortunately no one will be *my dear*,' said the Captain, looking at her sentimentally; but he might have saved that look, for she obstinately kept her head turned away.

'Now if I were to ask that young lady with the washed-out eyes, you know there *might* be a dearer one still and a nearer one yet than all other?' said Lionel, not believing what he said, for he felt sure no one could refuse him; but he liked to 'pang Mary,' as he expressed it. He was slightly taken aback when she coolly replied, 'Go and try. You'll get refused, for she's engaged to Mr. Carlton's nephew.'

'Pooh! that's only a rumour, like that other nonsensical story of her being a fisherman's daughter, and that poor consumptive fellow educating her. I believe old Carlton don't think his nephew will live, and so has adopted this girl to leave his money to,' said the Captain earnestly.

'You forget he has other relations besides his nephew John.'

'I know, but he's quarrelled with them all,' said Lionel.

'Do you know why?' The Captain did not answer, so Mary continued, 'He has quarrelled with them because they refuse to receive John if he marries Miss Jennings. The story is true: she is a fisherman's daughter, and John did educate her.'

'May I ask how you learned this delightfully romantic story?'

'Mrs. Carlton told mamma all about it the other day. It appears their engagement was not spoken of because he was in such bad health, but he is so much better that he is coming home to be married.'

'Ah! yes; don't be too sure. "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," Mary.'

'Old, but true. Take it to heart, Lionel,' said Mary, with a meaning glance.

'Certainly; I hope your romantic story will end in the right way—constancy rewarded, and all that sort of thing; but allow me to tell you everything goes by contrary in this life,' laughed Lionel; then, saying good-bye, he strode home, pondering upon what he had heard. 'She must be a poor relation of old Carlton's. Mary told me this out of spite, because she sees I admire her,' he argued with himself. Lucy was away, or he would have gone to her and asked if it were true; as it was, he asked his mother, but she knew nothing, not even where Lucy was stopping. At last he heard from Miss Robinson that she was with her father and mother at Bargate. Down to Bargate he went, in spite of its being in his opinion a horridly vulgar place, infested with shopkeepers and Jews. After a fortnight wasted,

he found the old sailor, and heard the whole story, with the fresh information that Lucy had gone back, for John had come home.

When Lionel reached home, he found nothing talked of but John's return, how much better he looked, and his engagement to Lucy. John was anxious to be married, that he might spend the winter abroad; but Lucy was in no hurry; she disliked talking of the old days, and grew pale and spiritless. She avoided going out, for fear of meeting Lionel; and yet she was perpetually thinking of him; it was no wonder John found her thoughts preoccupied. Lionel was in a greatly perturbed state of mind; he loved Lucy as much as it was in his nature to love anyone but himself, but he could not make up his mind to marry her. Then Mary's behaviour puzzled him; she was not exactly cold, but her manner had changed towards him. He wandered about in the forest, went to all their favourite haunts, but never saw Lucy. At last, one moonlight night in October, he caught her sitting on a rustic seat in a field that overlooked the road. Lucy had come up there to think of Lionel and look at the moonlight shining on the lake. She was neither astonished nor frightened when Captain Mead seated himself by her side; they had often sat there before.

'Lucy, why have you avoided me?' said he.

'Because I have no right to see you. Oh! pray go away, I am sure John will come,' said Lucy, waking up to the fact that she had no right to be sitting there with him when she was John's promised wife. 'Tell me you love me?' whispered Lionel. Lucy did not answer or move.

'If you won't speak to me, Lucy, I shall go,' said Lionel. Still she was silent. So he walked towards the hedge, but she never stirred. He was determined to make her answer him, so, finding she sat still, he went back.

'Lucy, why won't you speak to me? I know you love me. Don't think any more of that poor fool John; come with me and——'

'I will not!' said Lucy, starting up in a rage. 'How dare you call John a fool! He's good and noble, a much better man than you;' and then she sank down on the seat and began to cry.

Captain Mead was sorely puzzled; he had made a mistake in speaking of John, that was evident; he tried to rectify it.

'Come, Lucy, don't be so angry; I know John is good and

kind, and all that sort of thing; but you love me, don't you, dear?' The Captain spoke contemptuously, in spite of himself. Lucy noticed his tone, and it made her shudder. This was the man she had thought so much better than John—this creature who flirted with every woman he came near, and whose boast it was that he could make any woman love him. Lucy thought of all this, and scarcely heard all the sweet speeches he was trying to pour into her ear. She was so quiet that he thought he had prevailed, but she was thinking of John. How wicked and stupid she had been to be so flattered by this man's admiration! Lucy woke out of her reverie by hearing the Captain say, 'Will you not answer me? I shall go if you don't.'

She did not answer, and the Captain, hearing a footstep, went towards the hedge. Then Lucy started up. She might as well tell him that she never wished to see him again.

'Don't go just yet,' she said. Lionel turned.

'Lucy, come with me,' said John, coming between them. 'Captain Mead, meet me here to-morrow morning.' Lionel Mead did not answer, but sprang over the hedge as if he were shot. Lucy tremblingly followed John across the field, through the little kitchen garden, and down the hilly avenue. When they came in front of the houses she stopped, and, grasping John's arm, looked into his face with frightened eyes, saying, 'Oh, John! don't shoot him; promise me you won't.' He looked at her in astonishment, but, seeing she was really frightened, said—

'I will not hurt him. Oh, Lucy! how could you be so cruel? Did you not believe I loved you enough to make you happy at any sacrifice?'—'I don't want you to make a sacrifice. I will be your wife if you will forgive me.' John did not answer; she was trying him too much. He shook her hands off his arm and turned away his head.

'John! do forgive me, and believe me it is you that I love,' cried she, clasping her arms round him. John loosened her arms and said sternly—

'You should have thought of this before. I have seen you unhappy for some time, and I have watched you in Captain Mead's company. It seemed to me you loved him; so, after some struggle, I wrote and offered to give you up. He will get the letter when he reaches home. But, Lucy, you might have written to me and told me in Italy; it would have saved two months' misery.'

Lucy said nothing, but crept into the house, and up to her room, where she sobbed herself to sleep.

Next morning John went up to the field, but Lionel did not come, nor was there any answer from him till the evening, and then, in reply to John's kind letter, there came a short note, saying that Captain Mead feared Mr. Carlton had made some mistake; he never intended to ask the lady he mentioned to be his wife, for he was about to propose to Miss Sankey, and hoped to be accepted.

John puzzled over this for some time, and then worked himself into a rage, and raved till his aunt thought he had caught some of his uncle's bad temper. But John took her into his confidence, and showed her the letter. Mrs. Carlton laughed at him.

'Of course he had made the mistake in thinking a harmless flirtation so serious. Lucy had no business to flirt; but then she was young, fond of admiration, and this perhaps was a good thing, and would settle her.' Such was Mrs. Carlton's reasoning, and John was very glad to believe it; still he could not quite forgive that moonlight meeting; but Lucy told him all that had passed, and behaved so well in future that a year afterwards they were married, and neither of them have had cause to repent it.

Captain Lionel Mead has gone back to India without a wife; for, unfortunately for him, when he asked Miss Sankey to be his, she quietly replied—

'I have just accepted Mr. Morgan, who has loved me faithfully for some years.'

LAURA LEIGH.

LOVE AND REVENGE.

I.

THE golden afternoon sunshine is streaming through the wide-open windows of Karl Drexler's *atelier*; the river flashes and glitters; the tender green leaves rustle about the casement, and within the sound of hammer and chisel re-echo in regular cadence.

Four of the Master's disciples are at work on a colossal group of the Reformers in the centre of the room; no dilettante artists they, in black velvet and smoking-caps; but honest labourers in the art-vineyard; sturdy and intelligent, dusty as masons. Near the window stands a man absorbed in the contemplation of a chisel, and apparently quite unconscious of what is passing around him. Notwithstanding his powerful muscular development, his strong sinewy arms, deep chest, and broad shoulders, the abiding impression he leaves upon the mind is rather that of gentleness than strength. This may, in part, be owing to the singular beauty of his face—a beauty which in his student days had conferred upon him the somewhat irreverent title of 'the Galilean.'

He is a man who dwells much apart from his kind; a man of whom other men know but little. His whole soul is in his art. Amongst artists he is spoken of as one who will set—nay, who has already set—his mark upon the time. But he does not live their life; he does not share their pleasures; the coffee-gardens and the card-saloons know him not; he is never seen lounging about the dancing-places so dear to the Bohemian brotherhood; and only at distant intervals in the opera-house, where, with closed eyes, he will stand wrapt and absorbed in some masterpiece of melody. Now and again you may see him on sunny afternoons or moonlit evenings, rowing his little skiff with vigorous strokes up the grand old river; but on these occasions he is always alone.

In the rosy sunset-clouds, in the grand solitary moonlit mountain-peaks, he sees things which we of common mould see not. Men say

that he is rich; that princes pay fabulous sums for the veriest trifle from his hands; that kings' palaces are not deemed all glorious within unless some *chef-d'œuvre* of his be amongst their art-treasures.

He lives his old simple life in the Meister's modest home, working sometimes in his own private *atelier*, sometimes in the common room, and makes no further sign.

Striding to and fro in the big, bare, dusty workshop, is a handsome youth, whose exaggerated dress and somewhat swaggering manners have a lingering aroma of student-days about them. His clear dark Italian skin and smooth cheeks make him appear younger than he really is; and his slender figure and somewhat effeminate air complete the illusion.

'Begone, thou ne'er-do-weel,' said his uncle, coming to the open door of his inner sanctum, as a louder peal of laughter than had yet been heard, resounded from the centre group. Thy witticisms, Otto, were ever witless; and, not content with idleness thyself, thou wouldst fain beguile thy comrades into a like folly.'

'But, best uncle, I never heard that a jest spoilt the flavour of anything save a sermon; and these poor fellows are so tired of their Reformers, that a timely joke seems to me but Christian charity, so it relieve them of their tedium a little.'

'Tedium?' repeated the Meister, angrily; 'what can a trifler such as thou know of art? It is profaning the subject to talk to thee. Begone, and let thy comrades work in peace.'

'As you will, uncle; supper at seven as usual, I suppose?' and the scapegrace, saluting the mild Melancthon after a fashion which would have utterly scandalised his uncle, made a hasty exit.

II.

The sun had set, and the moon had risen, and on the rippling waters lay a track of argent glory. By the river-side Max Baumfeld was pacing to and fro. The king had set forth a prize for that sculptor who should produce the most perfect female figure within a given time: a wedding-gift for his daughter, the beautiful Princess Ermengarde. Lingeringly and lovingly Max's fancy played about

the marble on which he had already spent so many hours. No one, not even the trusty Meister, had seen the figure over which the many-folded linen hung, an impenetrable shroud. Even now, as he walked by the river-side, he felt the key of his studio on the chain at his neck. The Meister and his daughter were coming down to join him.

The water rippled and plashed, and the tiny pebbles shone in the lustrous light, and the air was heavy with sweet faint odours. A nightingale from a tree close by poured forth all her store of love-songs, and a warm breeze just faintly stirred the leaves above his head as Max sat down to think. It was always about the marble that his fancy played; and thus he was aware of voices close by him.

'But I tell you I am sure of it. That old arch-potterer, my uncle, may prophesy evil things; he thinks his own the only art. Have I lived for twenty years in Italy for nothing? No, my serpent of Old Nile!'

'And yet the Meister's art is good art, Otto. Remember that.'

'I remember nothing when I am with you, save that your hand is soft, your lips sweet, your voice music.' 'Yes—but the prize?' 'You are my prize, in a double sense. My Cleopatra will be a masterpiece. We will melt a pearl and drink our libations in her honour, when the time comes.' 'And Baumfeld? What is he doing?'

'*Chi lo sa*? Not I. A puritan, a hypocrite; with a nature as cold as the marble he works on, and a heart as hard as the hammer he wields. What harm can he do me?' 'He has done a good deal——' 'Of harm? I shouldn't have given him credit for that!' And Otto laughed lightly. 'Of harm? No! I mean that he is second to none, and that you are foolish to be so over-confident.' And the girl pushed her gay lover away from her, with an impatient petulant air.

'Gently, *bella mia*! I didn't know Max the magnificent had such a partisan in you. I am ready to confess that, in his own way, he has done a good deal, only all he does is like their northern climate, so cold that the heart is frozen out of it. So cold, so pure, so passionless, so cramped by proprieties and concessions to the conventional, that in the excess of the divine one misses the human. But come out of this crazy old barrack now, and don't let us talk high art when nature is so much more inviting. I must be going; I ought to have

been at home by seven,' and, trying to snatch a kiss, he drew her forth from the summer-house. But she evaded his caress, and shook herself free from his embrace. They were still in the shadow of the doorway, when the Meister and his daughter appeared at an angle of the road, coming towards them. Netta's great black eyes sparkled with jealous fury as she saw them approaching. 'I understand your impatience to be gone! It is her you came to meet; you might well be anxious to get rid of me! I——'

'Be silent!' said Baumfeld's calm grave voice, as he clasped her wrist; 'and you, Otto, go on to meet them; it would not be well the Meister should see you here; make what excuses you can. I will take care of Netta,' and as he spoke his grasp tightened on the model's slender wrist.

Otto obeyed sulkily. Netta remained silent; shame, anger, jealousy, all working in her face. After a few moments, when the darkness of the wood had closed behind them, she suddenly stopped. 'And what if I refuse to go with you, eh? What then? Why should I? What do *I* care whether his uncle sees us or no? Why should not I go back, and face the old hypocrite and his prim strait-laced daughter? What if I say I *will* do it? I know why you prevent me. It's not for my sake, and not for Otto's; it's for hers!—lest the hem of her saintly garments should so much as sweep the ground where I have trod; lest her purity should be polluted by the sight of me! Don't we all know how she is forbidden to come in contact with the poor models?'

Max made no reply, but his grasp never left her arm, as he drew her on through the wood. 'I know it all,' cried the passionate struggling creature. 'Old Drexler is rich, and he wants his handsome nephew for her; or rather *she* wants him; and the old man must gratify his darling's slightest whim; and you help; you are in the same boat with them. But they shan't have Otto! Not if I go to her, and tell her all; I will, I——'

'Netta, this is folly. The Meister has refused the best offers in all Kronstein for Fräulein Gertrude. He suffers his nephew, but I believe he would sooner see his child dead than married to such a feeble fritterer as he.' 'How dare you speak so of him to me?' 'And why not to you?' Is there daring in it? 'Netta, take care!' 'Why should I take care? Who is there to care for me? Your

prim respectabilities don't touch me, Max. They are very well for your Philistine townsfolk. *I* have no respectability to lose. Who would believe it if I *were* respectable? Ha, ha! a virtuous model!' And she laughed a wild scoffing laugh. 'Such things have been,' said Max, looking at her with grave, pitying eyes. 'Have they?' and she laughed again. 'Poor child!' said Max, 'poor child!'

At the exceeding tenderness and loving-kindness of his voice there came a sudden change upon her.

'Oh, Max,' she cried, 'forgive me; you are good;' and then, as the remembrance of Otto's exceeding contempt for Baumfeld flashed across her, she added timidly, 'How came you to be there? Did you hear——'

'Nothing you need have minded,' he said gently, willing to save her pain. 'But, Netta, what is to be the end of this?'

'I don't know,' she answered dejectedly. 'What does it matter?'

'It does matter. If you do not care for others, for the memory of your mother, for the sake of that other, try to care for yourself.'

'I can't, Max. You are the only being who ever spoke good words to me; but you'd better let me alone.'

'I can't do that. My mother promised yours, when she was dying, that we would look after you. That promise binds me still.'

Netta was sobbing bitterly now. 'You don't know what it is to be always alone,' she said, 'an outcast among outcasts. I haven't always gone the straight way, Max; you know that; but I'm not a bad girl; in spite of all you know, I'm not bad; not so bad, at least, but what it's dreadful to me not to be better. Even old Drexler doesn't think so very badly of me; I have sat to him often and often, and he always spoke gently to me, and treated me well.'

'But, Netta, forgive me—you have some one to love; to love and to live, and even to be respectable for. Later on, in a few years, in a new place, you might lead a happy life, if you would only try——'

'But I can't, Max; I haven't the strength. All that is so far off. I can't be always waiting and waiting; it's dreary work, that is. Why, I shall be old and ugly by that time—old and ugly;' and she stopped and looked into his face with a piteous, appealing expression.

'Old? yes; but that is a long way off,' he said, humouring her woman's vanity. And ugly? No, Netta. I can fancy you, twenty years hence, more beautiful—with another beauty—than you are

now.' 'Can you, Max?' she said, half wondering, half comprehending. 'But oh, Max, you have faith; you believe in people, and that makes everything different. I believe in nothing.' 'You believe in God?' She shook her head. 'Try to believe in yourself, Netta.' 'I only believe in you, Max.'

'Very well, Netta. Believe in me until you can believe in better things. Now go quietly home and—take care of yourself.'

She kissed his hand, and was gone.

III.

'We waited supper for you till half-past seven,' said the Meister, as his nephew came up to them.

'I'm so sorry; I went down the river to Holst's Garden, and then when I found it was so late I had my supper there.'

Gertrude smiled at him and nodded, but did not speak. She stood with her arm through her father's, looking at the rippling waters. The moonbeams fell full upon her face, and gave it an almost celestial beauty. Yet there was nothing of what poor Netta had jeeringly called 'the Saint' about her. Hers was a beauty of that pure Northern type which rather suggests matronly graces, and the motherhood of warriors and sea-kings, than ascetic virtues and pious reclusion. One could have fancied her a Kriemhilda or an Astrid—a fair Scandinavian queen, the loadstar of the Vikings. She had taken off her hat, and held it on her arm, so that her rippling golden hair shone in the moonlight like an aureole of glory. It was arranged in such a way that the massive plaits formed a little crown on the summit of her head, whilst a few soft curls fell at the back over her grandly-cut shoulders. She wore a close-fitting brown dress, square at the neck, and trimmed with broad black velvet. Her snow-white chemisette was gathered round her pillar-like throat and tied with a black velvet bow. Her skin was white and pure, her eyes large, lustrous and dreamy—eyes capable of great power of expression under emotional excitement, though just now they were soft and shadowy, and tenderly blue. The firm mouth and finely modelled chin betokened character; the noble bust, round waist, and shapely hands and arms, strength and helpfulness. Her dress had just that artistic feeling about it which an artist's daughter would be likely to possess.

And it was known in Kronstein that Gertrude valued no man's opinion, and no man's admiration, save only his.

As Otto looked at his cousin a smile of gratified vanity crossed his face. Netta—the jealous, impassioned, Netta—believed that he had only to ask and to have. There was more gold in old Drexler's money-chests than on Gertrude's fair head; and goodly stock of wine in the cellars, and store of linen in the presses. That would be for rainy days. First he must laugh in the sunshine with Netta, and let the proprieties (for the present) take care of themselves.

Meanwhile Gertrude was not extreme to mark what her handsome young cousin did amiss. Her father and Max, she told herself, lived at too high a pitch for her; their heads were amongst the stars, whilst hers was very near the earth. The quiet unemotional life between these two art-absorbed men was beginning to be wearisome to her. She was proud of them both; but pride could not fill out all her life. She wanted a little love, a little mirth and fun, and sunshine; and thus it came to pass that she often smiled on Otto's follies when the other two frowned. Of sin, wrong-doing and impurity, she had only such vague and awful ideas as well-nurtured young maidenhood should have.

'Did you meet Baumfeld?' asked the Meister, after they had stood for some minutes in silence, listening to the nightingale flooding all the air with passionate melody.

'Yes; and with a Dulcinea on his arm! What do you say to that, fair cousin?' The Meister's brow darkened. 'I wish he were more like other men,' answered Gertrude simply; 'then it would not be a thing to note. He dwells too much apart.' 'He lives for his art,' said her father sternly. 'He needs all his time and energies. He has no time to waste in frivolities.'

'And are all women "frivolities" father?' asked Gertrude coaxingly, whilst a soft musical laugh rippled away with the moonlit waters, and seemed to end somewhere in the nightingale's song.

'More or less, yes,' answered the Meister gravely. 'Max's art is his religion. But personal talk is idle; the stillness and the glory of the night are profaned by speech.'

'Canting old hypocrite!' thought Otto; and, inexpressibly bored, followed his uncle and cousin in silence as they turned homewards.

He had time to ponder the events of the evening. He hated

Baumfeld; and now that Max had become the witness of his folly with Netta, and had probably overheard his vain boasting, Otto told himself that he should hate him still more. What right had he to meddle? And how came he to use that tone of authority to Netta? She had never hinted at more than the merest common-place acquaintance with him. Why had she, so wilful, so defiant, so difficult to lead, so impossible to drive, gone at once and unresistingly with the sculptor? He would ask her why, and—keep his eyes open at home.

For a moment Gertrude paused, after wishing the two men good night, to take a last look at the jewelled skies. As she stood in the vine-covered porch, her pure beautiful upturned face, so tranquil, so innocent, so softly and serenely happy, a pang contracted her father's heart.

'Otto,' he said, hesitating and half-ashamed, as she disappeared in the doorway, 'would you mind telling me with whom Baumfeld was walking when you met him?'

'With Netta Brandes.'

'With Netta Brandes the model?'

'Yes.'

Max, in the shade of the clump of birch-trees, saw Gertrude disappear into the house, heard his old master's anxious question, and Otto's treacherous answer.

'The lying hound!' he said to himself, and for a moment a fierce gleam of anger and contempt shone in his eyes. But the next he said pitifully, 'My poor old master! to think that such a thing as that should be able to disquiet thee!'

IV.

Many an artist had sued in vain for permission to immortalise Gertrude's sweet noble face.

'It is not good that men's eyes should gaze upon a maiden,' said her old puritan father; 'nor do I care that every fool or knave should be able to buy thy likeness in stone or on paper.'

And Gertrude agreed.

Secretly and slowly in the Meister's mind an idea had taken root. All would be well if he could give his daughter to Max.

He was wise, modest, discreet, and a goodly man to look upon. But Gertrude, who had looked upon him since her childhood, did not seem to perceive his grand dignified comeliness. She preferred Otto's narrow Italian face, bold black eyes, and gleaming teeth. Who loved her 'must have some touch of earth.' And so, when once in an hour of twilight confidence Karl Drexler had hinted at the secret desires of his heart, Max had only stretched forth his hand, and grasped his master's with a tender smile, and sad shake of the head. To him it seemed that Gertrude was 'too fair to worship, too divine to love,' and the old man had accepted the gentle negation, and had said no more.

But since then, Otto, his sister's son, had come to them, claiming all the privileges of kinship. His presence was irksome to the old man. 'He may eat with us, and if he is minded to work he may work in the common room,' he said; 'but I will not have him sleeping here. My house is not an inn.' And it often went sorely against his grain to see how Gertrude would smile upon the young man's folly, whilst she let Max's words of wisdom go by.

Meanwhile Otto had betaken himself to the two rooms which he called home, and where he worked at his prize statue, and took his ease. It was too late to find Netta to-night, and he was bored by his uncle's 'canting humbug,' as he called it; but to-morrow he would certainly question her.

'I did not know you were so intimate with Baumfeld,' he said, as Netta entered the room next day.

Her brow was dark, and the curves of her beautiful mouth sullen.

'I don't know that I'm so intimate with him.'

'At anyrate you went with him readily enough last night.'

'Almost as readily as you flew to saint Gertrude.'

Otto, perceiving that she was jealous, did not hesitate to turn the knife in the wound.

'One must be civil to one's cousin,' he said carelessly.

'Yes, when one's cousin is rich.'

'Just so, my dear. But, Netta, your glorious beauty is more to me than all old Drexler's possessions, the fair Gertrude included!'

'Yes! until your Cleopatra is finished. Then all will be over.'

'Then will be only the beginning. Come, my sulky queen; clear your imperial brow, and smile on the most devoted of your slaves!'

But no smiles were to be had from Netta that day. Otto's light, jeering tone, jarred upon her. Max's words were still resounding in her ears. 'How was this all to end? And—afterwards!'

She placed herself in position, and Otto began his work. For a couple of hours there was silence between them; then Netta, sore at heart, burning with jealousy, rose to go. He let her depart. His Cleopatra must be accomplished; and then, the prize won, and his fair cousin to be wooed, all lighter loves must be forgotten in the steady pursuit of old Drexler's ingots.

V.

It was early in September. The grapes were gathered, the corn garnered in, the woods yellowing, and the days shortening; and in another month the beautiful Princess Ermengarde was to leave her fair and happy home, the willing bride of a kingly cousin, for a distant land.

Kronstein had always been famous in the annals of art; its monarchs had from time immemorial been liberal, art-loving, cultivated gentlemen; open-handed and open-hearted, sowing where they did not expect to reap, and strawing where they could not hope to gather. Foreign artists flocked to the hospitable little capital, foreign students filled its art-schools. Servant-maids and amateur soldiers might be seen wandering through the famous picture-galleries Sunday after Sunday, discussing old favourites or new acquisitions with all the gravity of acknowledged critics.

The music-room in the palace had been set apart for the reception of the sculpture from which the Princess Ermengarde was to choose a souvenir of her home; and, aided by the king, her royal bridegroom, and a select committee of artists who had not contributed to this collection, she had already made her choice, and would now within half an hour declare her award.

The bells were ringing gaily, crowds of people were streaming towards the palace. Artists and townsfolk assembled in knots together, discussing the chances of the competition with eager animation. Not one of the statues had as yet been seen. Curiosity ran high, and as Karl Drexler with Gertrude on his arm, Max and Otto

following, made his appearance, a little murmur of excitement ran through the crowd.

They were, in truth, a remarkable group. Karl, the art-patriarch of their town; Gertrude, 'die Krone von Kronstein;' Max—a celebrity since that day when his now famous Apollo from

'The cold marble leapt to life a god;'

and Otto, already spoken of as an enterprising young artist. There was a pause and deep silence as the king, his daughter, and his future son-in-law, entered the spacious music-hall.

'Friends, fellow-townsmen, and brother artists,' he said, 'my daughter the Princess Ermengarde begs me to thank you heartily on her behalf, not only for the loving labour of the past months, but also for your presence here to-day. By your means she is enabled to carry away with her to a distant land a lasting souvenir of her present happy home; and not of that home only in its narrower and more personal sense, but also of the beloved Fatherland. German art and German love have never been more worthily represented, nor made themselves more truly felt, than in the 'Germania' of our fellow-townsman and brother artist Herr Max Baumfeld, to whom, by the Princess Ermengarde's wish, I now award the prize.' As the king spoke, the veil which covered the statue was withdrawn, and the 'Germania' stood revealed.

Max, calm and self-possessed as ever, bowed deeply, and then moved towards the place where the king stood awaiting him. The Princess with her own fair hands awarded the prize, whilst she spoke a few words of gracious approval. Her future husband shook Max heartily by the hand, and then the royal party retired.

In vain Max strove to free himself from the congratulations of his friends. He longed, and yet dreaded, to meet Gertrude's look of silent reproach. Her father would be more easily pacified. The statue, being the princess's own private property, could not be reproduced. This thought had given Max courage to immortalise the exquisite face and form of his master's daughter. And now he longed to crave her pardon, to urge the extenuating circumstances, and to see forgiveness gradually dawning in her face.

All the other statues had been successively unveiled; and after giving orders that the 'Germania' should, in accordance with the king's

commands, be brought to his atelier early in the afternoon in order that the inscription might be immediately carved on the pedestal, Max found himself in the crowd which had collected round the Cleopatra; whilst Otto, pale with rage and disappointed ambition, had shrunk into a corner, whence he overheard, in silent fury, the candid remarks of the critics.

His Cleopatra was not in that stage of early girlish agility when Enobarbus saw her

> 'Hop forty paces through the public streets,
> And having lost her breath, she spoke and panted,
> Making defect perfection,'

but rather in that later stage of superb development when the haughty and luxurious Egyptian enchantress, sailing down the Cydnus, 'with purple sails, and poop of beaten gold,' sent imperious messages from her burnished throne to bid 'weak Antony, whom ne'er the word of No woman heard speak,' to supper, saying it were better he became her guest than she his.

The heavy sensuous limbs, the low broad brow, the full-lipped mouth, the half-draped bust and bare arms with massive armlets, and heavy plaits of hair, from which one could imagine she had just tossed the crown at her feet, together with the goblet and gems beside her couch, all told the story of the 'Rare Egyptian,' as her 'Roman Antony, her mailed Bacchus,' saw her, when he 'leapt to her arms contented there to die.'

'An insult, when offered to a virtuous princess as a remembrance of her home.'

'A strange mistake, certainly; the Brandes might have been a little more disguised.'

'As to that, the princess would only see the wily Egyptian in the statue.'

'Perhaps; but the king and those about him cannot have failed to recognize the likeness. Netta is a celebrity in her way.'

'Clever, clever—after a fashion,' said an old artist who had not as yet spoken. 'It has that sort of clap-trap sensationalism about it which an uneducated taste might mistake for power. Coarseness is not strength. Cleopatra was a clever woman. I see no ray of intellectual force in this, to redeem it from mere materialism.'

'Otto sets his mind against the sentimental in art. He despises drapery.'

'I prefer the nude myself; but it requires genius.'

'Strange that both statues should be portraits; but in the other there is at least nothing to offend.'

Fierce and miserable, Otto looked up. No greater contrast to his own work than the 'Germania' could have been imagined. Not the typical semi-colossal woman, half queen, half goddess, a conquering sword in her hand, a shield at her knee, and sandals on her feet, an imperial crown or massive turrets binding her brow; but a simple German maiden, conceived in the purest type of Northern beauty; grapes and ears of corn mingled with vine-leaves encircling her rippling hair; a dove perched upon her shoulder, a lamb at her feet; and in her hands a lyre crowned with oak-leaves. From her parted lips sweet songs of peace and joy seemed to issue. Her dress was the simple dress of the homely and yet refined woman of past ages, not the costume of any particular district or country; the face was the face of Gertrude Drexler; illuminated, irradiated, as only love could have divined and art portrayed it; full of promises, full of memories; exultant, fearless, happy, pure and sweet.

As he looked, something like a groan burst from Otto's white lips.

A finger touched him on the arm. It was Netta. She did not dare to speak to him here, in the crowd, before all these people.

'Come to my house,' she whispered pleadingly; 'Oh Otto, come.'

But he shook her roughly off, and moved away.

Gertrude was already safe at home; all her pride in Max's genius, all her glory in his success, vanquished by her feelings of mortification. As the veil had been withdrawn from the statue, and a hundred curious eyes had turned from it to the beautiful original, a crimson flush had mounted to her brow. What! he thought so little of her, held her so cheap, as not even to deem her consent necessary? And he, who knew how distasteful such a thing must be to her, to take her thus by surprise! Her heart swelled painfully; she leant heavily on her father's arm, and the colour ebbing from her face, left it as white as marble.

'Room, gentlemen; room, good folks; do you not see that my daughter is faint? The heat is too much for her.' He got her safely home at last, neither of them speaking by the way; then kissing her closed eyelids, and stroking her wealth of hair, 'My child,' he said, 'you must forgive him.'

'Never, father! Not even to have asked me! He thinks us all but so much potter's clay!' and the tears broke forth from beneath the heavy lids.

'Child, for his art's sake, you must forgive him.'

'I care nothing for his art, nothing. Father, I am sick of all this jargon; he could have served his art without outraging a maiden's nature. I am weary of these grand words. He has held me up to ridicule, to public scorn. Every gossip in the town will be scoffing at me before an hour is out!'

'You have not an artist's soul, Gertrude,' cried her father angrily. 'I, too, am offended; he should have asked us first; I grant it; but I can forgive. As to the people; what *they* think, the neighbours, what *they* whisper, be, like Egmont's Clärchen, above such babble!'

'Father, I cannot, I will not forgive him.'

'Stuff! Did Beatrice forgive Dante? Did Laura forgive Petrarch? Did Eleonora forgive Tasso? A child of mine should be above these petty Philistine scruples!' and the old man went out and shut the door angily.

In the gloaming a figure stood before Netta, who, pale and weary, and humiliated, had employed the afternoon in weeping her heart out.

'Otto!' she cried, springing to meet him.

'Let me alone,' he said; 'I wish to be quiet.'

The tears rose to her eyes. 'Otto, I will not trouble you; let me take your hand. They were all unjust; they looked at the subject more than at the execution; they were unjust.'

'Because for their virgin princess they chose the German prude rather than the shameless queen, with all her charms, eh?' and he cast a withering glance at her.

'Otto, do not be so pitiless. You chose me for your model, you know; I would never have offered. It *is* hard, but even your enemies were obliged to confess your work was very clever. Otto, dear Otto, is it nothing that I love you?'

Tears were running down her cheeks; her rich ripe beauty was dimmed and blurred; and yet as she knelt beside him, looking with great pathetic eyes into his face, Otto was obliged to confess that she was a grand creature. Only he hated her beauty now.

He shook her off, and went and stood by a table on which were various little nick-nacks and curiosities given to her by former friends.

and admirers. For a moment he stood deep in thought, trifling with these, whilst Netta turned her face to the wall and wept silently.

'How is this all to end? and—afterwards?' Max's words were resounding in her ears. So it had come to this.

'Good night!' he said, standing for a moment at the door before he went out.

'Oh, Otto, are you going? Shan't you come back again?'

'Not to-night; to-morrow, perhaps.' And he was gone.

VI.

The moon had risen. Dark shadows lay beneath the trees and about the house. Max stood alone in his atelier. The wide, uncurtained window was open, and a few yellowing vine-leaves rustled about the casement. In the centre of the room stood the 'Germania.' The moonbeams, falling on the pure unshrouded marble, cast a long black shadow across the boarded floor; behind the statue was another window, also open, for though late in the season the heat had all day been oppressive, and the blood in Max's veins was coursing ardently.

He had made his peace with the Meister, but Gertrude he had not yet seen. His heart beat loudly as he walked to and fro. Had he then offended her so irretrievably? Would her anger so far prevail as to defy her father's wrath; or would she not dare to disobey and come down to him, cold and resentful, though obedient?

The door opened. Gertrude, still in the white dress she had worn in the morning, stood upon the threshold, the living counterpart of the statue on its pedestal, only so much more beautiful, as warm human flesh and blood must be, than cold inanimate stone. Then the door closed, and Max spoke. She listened, and then, whilst his eyes were fixed upon her face, and his voice was still pleading for forgiveness, she suddenly 'fled to him and wept.' His arm was round her, her beautiful head lay upon his breast, his hand held hers; the silky waves of his long beard flowed over her pure cheeks, whilst he whispered words of tender passionate love into her ear. She knew then that she had always loved him; and putting him away from her, and forgetting for a moment all the soft rapture of the hour, she gazed fearlessly on this first of men, with the grand poetic

head and lambent eyes, all luminous with human love and bliss, and tried to realise that he was her own.

'Max!' she cried, and cast her arms about his neck, 'Oh Max, I love you, love you, love you!'

His lips met hers; his arms held her clasped in a firm embrace; then there was a crash, a groan, and then a piercing shriek.

When the Meister and old Gretchen came running with a light, they stumbled over the head of the 'Germania' at the door, whilst Max Baumfeld lay, bathed in blood, with his head in Gertrude's lap.

VII.

The whole town was in a state of consternation.

Max had no enemies. Gertrude could give no explanation. She had been standing in the moonlight with her lover, when suddenly she had heard a crash, and the next moment Max lay apparently lifeless at her feet, and the marble head was rolling on the floor. Max, between life and death, could not be questioned. Months must elapse before his evidence could be taken. Meanwhile a small pointed dagger, of foreign workmanship, had been found on the floor of the atelier, and had been deposited at the police-court, which the public were invited to inspect, and, if that were possible, give information concerning it. After some days an old crone had come forward and had identified the dagger as belonging to her lodger, a certain Netta Brandes; a stranger to the town, but well known amongst artists.

When questioned, the girl refused to say where she had spent that particular evening; nor did she acknowledge the dagger to be hers. Then Otto, who was pointed out by the crone as her lover, was examined.

A look of anguish crossed Netta's face when she was confronted with him. For a moment all her soul shone in her eyes; then the sullenness of despair settled down upon her, and she remained doggedly silent.

Yes, Otto said, he knew her. Was he her lover? Well, no; not exactly; there had certainly been some love-passages between them, but nothing serious. Here Netta's glowing eyes rested for a moment on his face in fierce contempt; he shrank beneath their blaze, and

evaded them. The dagger? Yes, he recognised it as hers; given to her, so she had told him, by an uncle who traded with the East; he had last seen it on her table when he had been for a few minutes in her room on the day of the Exhibition—on the evening of the attempted murder, if the coroner preferred to put it so. What had been her frame of mind on that occasion? Well, he should say she was excited; appeared unsettled. Had he cause to suspect any motive for jealousy, or any reason why she should feel resentment against Baumfeld? Well yes—and here the witness hesitated and appeared confused—there was no doubt some secret understanding between them; the sculptor had great influence over her; he, Otto, had seen them together in remote places. No, he could not say what the nature of their understanding was. He had joked her about it, and she had evaded the question.

On Otto's evidence, Netta was carried off to prison. She cast one long, agonized, supplicating look at him, and then followed the jailer without a word.

VIII.

The old Meister was dead. The shock, they said, had killed him; but before he died, by his bedside, Max and Gertrude were made man and wife. Max had been able to throw no light upon the mystery of that September night. Otto, after wandering restlessly from one place to another, unable to settle to any sort of work, had disappeared. 'Gone back to Italy' was the report. The 'beautiful Brandes,' beautiful no longer, had been discharged from prison, and she too, had shortly afterwards left the place.

Max and Gertrude sat in their garden. The spring sun had not as yet much warmth, but the newly-married lovers preferred the brightness without to the stove-heat within.

'Max!' said a faint voice; and looking up, they saw Netta. He started, and weakness made the ready crimson rush to his face. Gertrude, whose arm had been about him, withdrew a little from his side. An uneasy fear at her heart made her shrink from the pale, wan woman, before her. And Netta was not alone. By the hand she led a beautiful fair-haired boy of five, who, clinging to her skirts, gazed shyly, with one finger in his mouth, at the lovely golden-haired

lady like the Queen in his picture-book; at the tall, pale, large-eyed man, by her side.

'Max,' said Netta, pleadingly. Her voice went to his heart; he could not resist it. He looked at Gertrude, but not even the shade upon her brow, nor the pallor of her face, could restrain him from answering the appeal.

'Yes, Netta, what is it?' he said.

'Max, I am going. I have been imprisoned for months; that is a stain no after-time can wipe off. You are the only being in the world who was ever good to me—the only one to whom I care to explain.' She never so much as glanced at Gertrude, who, chilled and expectant, sat between the two, her heart turning to stone within her. 'Before I go, Max, I want to hear you say that you do not believe I did that dreadful deed.'

There was a pause: then Max answered gently,

'Netta, long since I have forgiven you.'

'But you shall not forgive me! Not for that, at least. Max, listen. When you promised my dying mother and your own never to abandon me, you said a solemn thing, but you meant it. When you saved me from being the murderess of my own child, for in my shame and frenzy it seemed to me the best thing I could do,' she added, turning to Gertrude, who pale and rigid sat apart, 'you bound me to you for ever by a debt of eternal gratitude. It was your hand that snatched me back, and saved my babe from destruction; it was you who carried him away, and hid him in a place of safety for me, and kept my shameful secret, and cast no stone of reproach at me. On that September night, I too, Max, was in the garden. I saw the great hammer fall upon the marble, I heard the crash, and afterwards the scream of your betrothed; and in the confusion I fled. The dagger was mine; Otto had taken it from my table that afternoon; the hammer was his. I had often seen it in his atelier. He flung it amongst the bushes as he leapt out of the window. It lies in the depths of the river (of that river from which you saved my babe). I cast it over the centre arch that very night. It was upon Otto's evidence that I was imprisoned. Six weeks ago he sailed for America. I told him before he went that I knew all——'

'But why did you not give evidence against him?'

'I—? I loved him, Max. And besides' (this bitterly, as she

glanced sidewise at the pale, proud woman in black) you would not have wished me to disgrace your wife's cousin? And then he was so miserable; so disappointed about his Cleopatra; so mortified at being disgraced in the eyes of his kinsfolk. See; here is his written confession. He never meant to do it. He had taken up the dagger in a fit of absence: the hammer he often carried with him. A sudden madness seized him when he saw you so successful, so happy, standing beneath your beautiful statue with his cousin in your arms; it was more than his brain could bear. He always thought that his cousin—it was jealousy of her that had led me to follow him——' She paused, with crimson cheeks.

Gertrude's cheeks were also glowing. 'He had no right to think so,' she said proudly.

'And you, my poor wandering child, have borne all this—scorn, contumely, imprisonment—for his sake?'

'I loved him, Max.'

Baumfeld shuddered.

'And now I must go. Say you believe I did not do it; say you believe me, Max.'

'God knows that I believe you, my poor Netta.'

'And now say good-bye to me; it is for ever.'

'And whither are you going?'

'To America.'

'To him?'

She nodded.

'Stay here, Netta; stay at least in your native country.'

'You forget that the murderess's brand is upon me. Here I can find no abiding place; there no one knows me.'

'There you will be alone.'

'I shall have him. He will be good to me now. Remember what I have suffered for his sake; that will bind him to me; and the sense that I know all, and yet love him; and—' after a pause, more timidly, 'he has promised to marry me. It will be better for my little Max; you see I have fetched him. And now say good-bye, for we are going away together.'

'Good-bye, Netta, if it must be so. Take care of my little godson, and don't let him forget his own country and his own people;' and Max stretched forth his hand, and took her thin one between his

own. Then he stooped and kissed the boy, who stood looking on with wondering eyes.

All this time Gertrude had spoken no word. There was a pause, and Netta stood for a moment hesitating. She dared not approach the pale pure woman before her. But Gertrude arose, and suddenly taking the outcast's hands in hers, kissed her on both sides of her poor wan face.

'Stay with us, Netta,' she said; and her eyes were wet with sweet, gracious tears.

But Netta only shook her head, and, pressing her lips to Gertrude's hand, departed.

Far off in the distance, as they leant upon the garden wall, Max and Gertrude saw the two pilgrim figures disappearing in the sunshine. At length a turn of the road hid them from their gaze.

'Gertrude,' said Max, turning to his golden-haired love, 'you were never so gracious or so lovely in my eyes as when you kissed and forgave yonder poor sinner.'

'To her much should be forgiven, for she has loved much.'

'And you forgive me?'

'No, Max; for I love you.'

THE COUNTESS VON BOTHMER.

TIME: AN APOLOGUE.

THE genii of the Past, the Present, and the Future met and discussed their relative weight and importance in the affairs of the world. 'See!' said the Past, 'how great is the work I have done—all till now is mine.' 'Bah!' said the Future, 'your labours have come to an end; and, besides, they are insignificant in amount to what is left for me to accomplish.' 'Cease, both of you,' interposed the Present. 'Neither of you has accomplished aught. What has been done has been done by me alone. What remains will also be done by me. In truth, I perceive that you both are phantasms, and that neither has real existence.'

THOMAS PURNELL.

A TALE OF HIGH COLOUR.

SEARCH all the world from pole to pole, from Panama to Siam,
From Boston or from Bagdad to the House of John o' Groat,
I don't believe you'll find a man less predisposed than I am
To picking holes in anything that *can* be called a coat.

My own is motley, I confess—a mantle many-coloured,
The which (like charity) doth hide a multitude of sins ;
And pervious, alack, it is to witling and to dullard,
As soon as each to try on me his quality begins.

O sombre-minded countrymen, who hate a fancy tinted,
Who think that arrows gaily plumed can never hit the mark !
Just wait till I have written out and got a story printed,
To prove your doctrine's feeble as an eye that loves the dark.

There lived a poor secluded man whose name was heard on few lips,
In kindliness or calumny, in prattle or in prayer,
Who found a certain pleasure in a little bed of tulips,
The rather for their beauty than because the things were rare.

The red rich earth of Devonshire—for mine's a Devon story
Of elvish little folk who haunt the Southern hills and vales—
Fed high each bulb and stem till it was crowned with dainty glory,
Beside whose glowing hue the gayest neighbour-petal pales.

In lands more near the sun the prime prismatic tints to mix is
A custom of the nations who have bolder views of art
Than chilly English people : and the fairy race of Pixies
In yellow and vermilion take the Oriental part.

Those Pixies down in Devonshire with more than Persian bounty
  Cast colour in the hedges, through the forest, o'er the fields ;
And we should find it hard to name another English county
  As cheerfully chromatic in the flora that it yields.

The Pixies and the tulip-bed were very soon acquainted.
  By night the busy artists of the famous 'Nature-School'
Came there with magic pencils, and each graceful chalice painted
  With pigments that would well-nigh make Vesuvius look cool.

And morning after morning, when their task was ended, lightly
  They tripped across the meadows ere the cock began to crow ;
And morning after morning, as the colours flamed more brightly,
  The gladness of the lonely man increased before the glow.

He died. And still the tulips grew beside the silent portal,
  Their silken bravery undimmed by shade of human grief :
For Nature does not sympathise ; and Beauty is immortal,
  And strong men's hearts shall wither, and the wind shake not a leaf.

But now there came another man to own and till the garden,
  Who cared for colour merely as it shows a guinea's gold ;
Whose life from day to day was spent in deeds that sour and harden ;
  Who in a deepening dulness found the way of growing old.

A patch of parsley filled the place of all those painted petals
  Whereon the Pixies long had loved their cunning to bestow ;
And pettishly they choked the herb with rank unhandsome nettles,
  That flourished at the inverse rate the parsley failed to grow.

They sought the grave of him whose hand the tulip-bed had planted,
  They sang their dirges tenderly beneath the tender moon ;
And night by night that solemn spot the grateful Pixies haunted,
  And flowers upon the mound began to spring and blossom soon.

They covered it with tints as gay as those which cheered his eyesight
  When living, in the life-time of the little tulip-bed.
The tale is told : I would but add that such a grave, to *my* sight,
  Suggests the very monument I long for when I'm dead.

GODFREY TURNER.

A NEW LEASE OF LIFE.

I'VE often wondered what an old fellow like me has to do with the world in these days when everybody seems to be in a hurry, and there is no time to dream even after one has gone to bed. When I was a boy, people used to believe in dreams, and to buy the 'Royal Dream Book.' There was life and pleasant company enough of a quiet sort when I was younger. Well-to-do tradesfolk, all within sound of the great bell of St. Paul's, kept their hearts warm with hospitable intents, and many was the cosy little party where I was an invited guest; for I could sing a good song—mostly sentimental, though—and my position in the City was that of a sober fellow grave beyond his years even after he had silver streaks in his hair, and had looked into the old family Bible to see whether he was to be forty-five or forty-six next birthday.

I suppose I shall be told that a man of that age has no business to fall in love; and I think so too. But perhaps nobody could see Alice R—— without thinking of love. She was the daughter of a pastrycook. Men who lead such quiet lives as mine, and journey down the road of time in such a jog-trot way, often cease to count the milestones. I have often blessed her that she did not make sport of the sudden declaration into which the strange intoxication of my passion led me. She was surprised, and sorry—very sorry—that was all, and that was enough. It was a failure, no more. Well, a folly if you will have it so; but it remained a tender secret, such as a man locks in his heart and seldom speaks of till he has grown old or thinks that he is like to die. I was lonely enough so far as kith and kin were concerned. My sister—there were but two of us—and her husband were both dead, years before, and though they left a son, a bright likely boy, he was handed over to the charge of another uncle, his father's brother. All that I could do for the lad, when he was a little fellow, I had tried hard to accomplish; and

though the life—that of a lower-form boy in Christ's Hospital—was hard enough, he was often allowed to come to Twidlers' Hall. There was something to my mind wonderfully in keeping between the lad's quaint dress and the dim shadowy ante-room where he would sit with his yellow legs curled up on one of the big leather chairs, and read some of my old-fashioned books.

Tales of adventure, sea stories, were most to his taste, and I have looked at him with misgiving many a time, as I saw his luminous grey eyes raised from the book, and staring out over the tops of the plane-trees as though he heard the sound of the river and smelt the salt breeze rushing up the channel of the Thames. He was to be apprenticed to his uncle, and the indentures were made out. The day before they were to be signed he had disappeared with such clothes as he could call his own, and in his pockets only fifteen shillings and an old silver watch that I had given him. Yes, I was lonely indeed when the beauty of Alice R—— flashed like a dazzling light into the dim chamber of my life, and my heart went out to sea after the boy who might have been a son to me if only I could have been more bold to claim him, as I had a right to do. Did I say that Alice married? The wedding-day had been fixed between her and Richard —— before I spoke to her words that showed my hopeless love. A tall good-looking fellow from Cumberland, with a devil-may-care air, and a reputation as a bold rider and a 'ladies' man,' as the cant phrase went. I had met him once or twice, and noted the looks he cast upon her—looks that I should have resented but that I knew how my own suspicions were urged by the silent rivalry I bore him. They were married, and went out of my narrow compass —made more narrow now that I had to overcome the sense of disappointment. Time mellowed down that grief into a pathetic memory. The wound had healed, and why should I be for ever showing the scar? I went about again amongst my friends—their numbers diminished now as years went calmly on in the humdrum duties of my place. How little did I imagine, amidst all my sober day-dreams, that Alice R—— would yet hold a chief place in my future life. I was sitting one warm wet and long autumn evening, when our messenger hurried to my room door to say that a woman was waiting in the lower lobby to see me. I went down directly, and there stood a poor Irish wench, crying bitterly, and asking me to come with her directly to see

her mistress, who was dying. At the name of that mistress I was almost paralysed beyond the power to think, and then went out with such eager haste that the messenger came running after me with my hat and stick. Through the muddy streets, with the Irish girl clinging to my arm in order to keep pace with me, I went. Through the muddy streets, and up a creaking stair, to a poor lodging in the neighbourhood of Barbican. I stopped for a moment to still the heavy labour of my breath, and then creeping softly into a miserably-furnished room, saw the beautiful woman whom I had loved, whom I still loved with the strength of an honest man. She was sitting up in a great old chair. In a little bed under the window was a child looking with wide plaintive eyes—a child so like her mother that it needed no word to tell me the relationship.

Only a year after Alice's marriage, the old City tradesman, her father, had died, and left his savings to her and her husband, for he had wrought his own way, and little knew or cared for such relations as he had known when he was a penniless boy working for bread and lodging in a London bakehouse. That money had been the ruin of Richard, who, with a few pounds, had sailed for Australia—then in the height of the gold fever—whence he was to send a letter, or, better still, to come home within two years with a second fortune. No word had reached her since, though that was three years ago. She died. I had tried in vain to discover her relations. When I called on the fourth day, the hired nurse was weeping, and the poor faithful Irish servant was crooning a wail over the little girl as she hid her face in the honest creature's lap. What was I to do? Those who might have taken the precious gift, had not claimed it. I thought of how my own life might be made more radiant by this child, the child of her who should have been my wife, and therefore mine by the love I bore to her mother. I held out my hand as she sprang up to greet me, and with a few whispered words to the nurse led her away, her soft chubby fist clasping my finger.

For fifteen years and more her influence—the influence of one whom I can love as though she were my own child—indeed has blest me. The old hall, yes, even the dark oak room, so gloomy at other times, became radiant with her, quiet and gentle as she was,

and her voice made such music that the echoes seemed to sing responses to her happy childish songs.

The quiet currents of our lives have run on since then, and here is my little daughter grown into a woman, so like her mother sometimes in the turn of her face, and a certain glance of the eye, that I begin to wonder I have so seldom noticed the resemblance.

Did I say that she used to sing very sweetly about the old place? I had taught her, for I had a knack with both the flute and violin, and had been a tolerable musician in my time. One day—it wanted but a week to Midsummer—I was sitting in my own room, making up my accounts for the next board meeting, when I heard her full mellow notes on the stair.

> 'The wind that blows,
> The ship that goes,
> And the lass that loves a sailor.'

'Where did you learn that song, Allie?' I said, laughing.

A bright blush mounted to her forehead. 'I heard—a—a gentleman sing it at Mrs. Power's the other evening.'

'A gentleman! What, was there a party there, child? I thought Mrs. Power was to be alone?' 'Yes, but Mr. Power brought a gentleman with him.' 'Old or young?' 'Young.' 'What was his name?' 'I don't know—I think it was Allan. Oh, he sang so well. I wish you had been there, Dadda; you know you promised to fetch me home.' 'Yes, but Mullinger came for you, didn't he?' 'The gentleman—Mr. Allan, I mean—came with us, and wanted to see you.'

I was uneasy, and yet what was to be done.

In the disturbance of my spirits I took up my hat and went out. Almost without any purpose, I turned towards Lower Thames Street and into Monument Yard, where an old acquaintance was sitting, smoking the pipe of peace in his bower. He was not alone, however; for standing with his back against the door-jamb was a gaunt wild figure, poorly dressed in a coarse holland coat, and a shirt all open, where a ragged reddish beard streaked with grey hung down upon his breast. He had a bag and two or three small cages in his hands, and, as he made way for me to enter, put a bird that he had held perched upon his finger into one of them. 'I'll just take a turn round while you speak to your friend,' he said in a deep breathless kind of voice, as he went out.

'Yes, that is a strange character,' said my friend, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. 'I see you're trying to take stock of him, as they call it; but you won't find it easy. One of the best bird-fanciers in London, he is. He's been half over the world a'most. And how's pretty missy? Law, now, if I didn't promise her another bird, and that chap's got the very thing I want; if he'd only come back, I'd send it to her with my love, bless her bright eyes.'

We hadn't long to wait. The strange figure of the bird-stuffer came before the door, and my friend bargained with him for the purchase of the little songster that had perched on his hand. 'But he won't do that for the young lady unless I introduce him to her, and show her how to coax him,' he said. 'I must carry him home for you.' I bade my friend good evening, and went back again, feeling more comfortable in my mind. The bird-fancier strode after me.

When we reached the gate of our hall, he looked up curiously at the old porch, and, as I thought, seemed to hang back a little. There was a little brass plate under the bell-handle, with the name of the hall engraved upon it in church text. He looked at it from under his ragged brows, and then looked at me.

'You haven't a relative of the name of Allan, perhaps?'

'None, to my knowledge,' I replied. 'Where does he live?'

'Ah, that's more than I can tell you. He was more like dying than living when I first made his acquaintance, but he had youth and health on his side, and so I nursed him through; but you don't know him, I see—and yet—how long may you have lived here?' 'Above forty years.' 'Ah, then, I was mistaken; it can't be. So this is the young lady,' he said quickly, as Alice, who had come down to let us in, now stood in the hall. It was strange that he should look at her with such intensity; his eyes fastened on her with a questioning expression as of one who had been long seeking. It took only a few minutes to teach Alice how to coax her pretty feathered pet.

While the bird-fancier was showing her the way to manage it, he kept his searching gaze upon her, and was so absorbed that when I touched him on the shoulder he started.

'Come,' I said, 'you will take some bread and cheese and ale in return for so much trouble.'

'No, I think not,' he said with an abstracted air, and in the same

still tones that sounded almost ghostly in their breathless depth. 'But if you'd let the young lady accept another bird from me—— What did you say her name was?' 'Alice.' 'Your daughter?' 'Well—yes, as much as is possible—my daughter and my ward.' Why was he so curious; and still with that strange hungry look in his eyes. 'I will willingly buy another bird for her,' I said, 'or she shall buy one for herself. 'No; she may buy the cage, but not the bird. I'd much rather give her both, though.'

'Come, come,' I said, 'we'll give you half-a-crown for the cage, then, and call the bird a present, for which Alice will thank you, I'm sure.'

Our strange visitor made as though he would refuse the money; but, on our pressing him, slowly unfolded the paper in which it was enclosed, and was about to drop the silver into his pocket, when the writing on that fragment of the envelope caught his eye. A sudden spasm flitted across his face, which was white even to his lips.

'Alice R——,' he whispered. 'Is that *your* name, child?'

He seemed to control some strong emotion by a violent effort. 'I should know this writing,' he said presently. 'You told me you did not know a man named Allan, and yet I've letters of his that would stand by this before any court of law. Who sent you this letter, dear?'

'It was Mr. Allan,' cried Alice in a frightened tone. 'It only came an hour ago, dear,' she added, with her head upon my shoulder. 'Mr. Allan writes that he will call.' 'I must see him,' said the bird fancier, looking at us both with a troubled glance, as he thrust the scrap of paper into his breast. 'He will not refuse me; don't think it; for I saved his life twice—once when we were chums together in the gold-fields, and I shot the fellow who was crawling under his tent to murder him for the sake of his lucky 'find'; and once again when I fished him out of the bush.'

Without another word, but with the same wild troubled look, he went out so swiftly that before I could stay him he had clanged the door. There were no harsh words between my darling and me. No upbraiding. She was as innocent of any wrong, or of any want of candour, as the baby on its mother's knee. There was a dim cloud hanging over us which to me seemed threatening; to her, only uncertain.

'You will never leave me all lonely?' 'Never, never, dear Dadda,' she cried, with a great sob in her voice. 'Not even if I should—if I should never see him again.'

So that was the *if*. I saw how it was. Poor child! poor child! The next day was Sunday. In the morning we went to church together as usual. 'There was a person passed here last night, as I was sweeping out the porch, that asked me some questions about you, sir,' said my old friend the sexton, as I went up to our pew. 'He asked whether I knew how Miss Alice came to be your ward, and I pointed him to the gravestone yonder. That was the best answer I can give you, my man, thinks I. Least said soonest mended.'

'What sort of person, Simmonds?' I asked.

'Wildish look about him, and wanted shaving in particular; had a couple of bird-cages in his hand.'

I fear I heard little of the sermon. I was uneasy all the morning. What was coming upon me? Were these two men, strangers both of them, conspiring to rob me of my treasure?

In the afternoon we sung some hymns together. Alice and I felt happier, but still restless. The dear girl made me my tea; and as the shadows in the old courtyard lengthened, I said I would go across to the church, to speak to Simmonds. There had been afternoon service, but we had none in the evening; so the door was closed already, but not fastened; and it yielded to my touch. The dusk had already begun to settle on the dark side of the building, which lay all in shadow, but through the windows next the graveyard there came a golden glory that chequered the pavement before the altar, and made a path of light from the vestry door to the pew in which I always sat—a pew near one of the windows through which I could see the grave that held the one secret of my life. I stood up to look at it now, as the waning light cast flickering patches on some strange object lying upon the grave—the figure of a man who, with his face hidden in his hands, prayed or wept there. Before I could cry out, and while I held to the oaken sill to keep myself steady, there was a sound of slow footsteps in the weed-grown path, and two other people came upon the recumbent figure, on their way towards the church. Was it possible? one of them was Alice—my own girl—with only a hood thrown loosely over her head as though she had come out hurriedly, as indeed she must have done; and by her side a man, tall, stalwart, sunburnt, who bent and whispered as he held her by the hand.

Almost before they saw him, the man at the grave had leaped up

with a great cry, and in another moment had seized the younger by both hands. I knew him, though he was trimmed, and shaved, and had exchanged his sordid dress for a decent suit of black cloth. It was the bird-fancier of the day before, and with the hungry look gone from his eyes, as though he had at last found what he had sought. Right in the centre of that golden glory—fainter now—they stood, the three together! and in a moment I knew them—knew both men, that is. I saw, in the elder of the two, the husband of the woman I had loved; in the other, my own boy, my own long-lost Alick. His arm was round her—round my girl—and his other hand was stretched out to me as he hurried on, and she, how she clung to him!

They led me home. There, in the old room, looking over the tops of the plane-trees, to the silver blue of the summer sky, we sat far into the night; for there was much to tell. How, in the wild land to which he had gone under another name, Alick had found a friend and comrade in Richard ——. How my boy had worked and found gold, and traded and prospered, and was now a partner in an Australian merchant's house of London city. How the man whom I was trying hard to pardon—as if my poor pardon could aid or mar him—had been a wanderer and fallen into terrible straits, had gone from Australia to the other golden colony in California, had lived in lone prairies, and on drear lagoons; had been held captive by Indians in Mexico; had been in prison and condemned to death, and yet had escaped; and come home to hear no tidings of the wife whom he had left. How again, and yet again, he had returned to make new search. All this and more I listened to, until the chiming of the clocks, and a silver streak far out towards the edge of dawn, forced us to part till the following evening.

As I lay sleepless, waiting for the morning in my little bedroom, I wondered whether I had any further business in the world; but yet, to tell you the truth, I am no way anxious to get out of it—at all events, not till after the wedding; and then I shall take my superannuation from the Twidlers, and only go to the old Hall now and then, because I can't quite bear to part with it altogether.

THOMAS ARCHER.

THE GAMBLING HANDS.

It was at Sorrento I saw them! Sorrento, of which poor John Sterling says, in one of his letters, published in his Life by Carlyle, that 'if mere delight of landscape and climate were enough, Adam and Eve (had their courier taken them to that region) might have done well enough without Paradise!' Sorrento; the birth-place of Tasso: the spot where he dwelt when a child; where—among wild rocks, soft sunshine, and glittering orchards of lemon and orange-trees, and the blue sea bounding all—the first dawn of poetry woke in that fervent mind; perhaps also the first dreams of ambition, born of a conscious superiority to those around him. I thought, then, of Tasso's life. How all had begun, and how all had ended. Of the Poet, with a thousand dreaming fancies. Of the Man, with one solitary passion gnawing at his heart and undermining his senses. Of the garland of fame and the broken heart!

As I sate out on the high terrace and watched the glorious moonlight streaking with silver the darkness of the sapphire waters far below, I became gradually so absorbed in thoughts of this dead Tasso and his history, that I no longer saw real objects. Visions came to me. Visions floating towards me, and floating away from me. Pageants of by-gone Courts. Love-scenes between those who had long ago been *poco di polvere che nulla sente.* Studious hours when, with bent head and silent contemplation, the chief actor in those busier scenes withdrew his soul from the world, and remained alone with the God who gives such various faculties to his restless creatures: such power of suffering to those lives of a span long, and such power over other men's minds from generation to generation, in spite of the mocking brevity of their own actual and allotted existence! I was pierced and penetrated by the sorrows of this man, whose sorrows ended three hundred years ago. A passionate glow of sympathy moved me for his love; though that love be nothing now but a disputed tradition. I saw him studying

at Padua; a dreamy lad of eighteen, glorying in the success of his first poem, 'Rinaldo.' I saw him three years later; flattered, caressed, complimented, at the brilliant Court of Ferrara; travelling thence with the Cardinal d'Este to the French Court of the cruel and luxurious though intellectual Charles IX. Leaving France; returning to Ferrara, and seeing his beautiful pastoral drama of 'Aminta' acted there. Full of renewed dreams of fame; full of his grand poem of 'Jerusalem Delivered.' Yielding gradually to his passion for that proud and lovely Lady, Leonora, sister to the duke his patron. Struggling against that passion. Conquered by it. Proving, what all men have proved from the days of Adam, that woman's love must either be a blessing or a curse. Fleeing from it; wandering from city to city, seeking rest, and finding none. Back among the ties of peaceful innocent childhood. Once more with his tender and loving sister; leaning his wearied head in confessed anguish on her pitying breast. Away again; at Ferrara. Tangled again in the thoughts that are fetters to the soul! Daring and desperate in his love, aspiring wildly, converted to the mad superstition that the superiority given by God can lift a man to the level of those who bear crowns and titles bestowed by their fellow mortals. Punished for that belief; like other martyrs of an erring faith. Thrown into prison: the darkest of all prisons, that in which men are kept who have lost their reason. Set free at last. Famous and flattered once more. Called to Rome to be crowned Laureate by Clement VIII.; and dying of a wasting fever, before the hollow compliment could be paid, which was the preface to his immortality.

Oh Tasso—oh Poet—oh aching and suffering heart. Did SHE plead for you, yearn for you, pity you, in the blank and barren years when her haughty brother put your body in prison to punish your passionate soul? Did the long patience, enforced and lonely, help you to a cure? Did a noble disdain ever settle like refined gold in the crucible of that burning anguish, to bid the dross and scum of earthly passion pass away and boil over, or did you pine to the end for the Elixir Vitæ of that woman's love? Did others pine for *you*, as you for her, when the recital of your poetry thrilled the hearts and moistened the eyes of many listeners? Were your last wistful thoughts of Leonora? or of the shouting crowds and laurel crown awaiting you while your pulse ebbed, your eye glazed, and your troubled heart ceased from its labours?

As I considered these last thoughts, suddenly I was disturbed in my reverie. I beheld a strange sight: a sight similar, and yet most dissimilar, to one recorded in Lockhart's 'Life of Scott,' which was afterwards pointed out to me; where two friends notice at a casement a man's hands rapidly arranging sheets of writing on a desk, and learn that they were the hands of 'The Great Magician.'

No such celebrity broke in on my Sorrento dreams of the dead Italian; but at a casement a good deal lower than the terrace where I was seated, a light suddenly appeared! A common lamp with a green shade over it, carried by two hands, and carefully set down on a table covered with green baize, which stood in the window. A very narrow window, it was; that did not permit me to perceive the occupants of the room (if, indeed, there were any occupants), but only the arrangement of the table. Startled back into the world of realities, my eyes fixed themselves on the lamp, and on the green radiance thrown on the baize. Tasso, and the train of thoughts associated with him, vanished away. Not without an angry feeling of regret; but who was to blame: I could scarcely be angry because a waiter in a neighbouring hotel had set a lamp on a table. Whose lamp, I wonder? Whose room, who is staying there? I forget Tasso, and wonder if any acquaintance of mine has just arrived, or has been there some days already before my own arrival? I watch the lamp; it has a certain fascination for me, though I wish it had not broken in on my dreams, and jarred the soft white moonlight with its yellower glow and its reflection on the green baize. Presently there is a little stir at the table. Two pairs of hands come and settle two packs of cards upon it. One pair of hands lifted the shade of the lamp an inch or so higher. The other pair shuffled the cards. They shuffle very slowly. Presently the lifted pair of hands rest quietly on the table. Cards are dealt. The hands stretch out for their own allotted share from each side. I can see the cards and the hands; I fail to see the people who hold the cards, though I rise and bend over the balcony of the terrace, and try to make out who is playing. All I can decide is that they are male players. The hands have shirt wristbands and cloth cuffs.

Two gentlemen are playing cards. I wonder who they are. The shirt cuffs of one pair of hands are very long. I think they must belong to a foreigner. The little finger of the hand nearest to me

of the other pair of hands, has a very heavy signet ring. I wonder if it is an antique. Perhaps only an imitation. The chances are that it is modern : so many imitations are made now in Rome and elsewhere. I daresay this gentleman has come from Rome to Naples, and so to Sorrento. I am rather lost, for a few minutes, in a new reverie—upon signet rings—how they have opened the door of prisons, and set prisoners free ; served as tokens for massacre ; served as tokens of mercy; dumb messengers of love, of life, of death ! My attention is recalled by the behaviour of the Gambling Hands. The pair of hands with the signet is getting impatient. There is something at once hasty and yet hesitating in their choice of a card to lay down. The other hands seem quite calm. The play goes on. Presently both play more rapidly. That round is over. There is a reckoning of counters, and a renewed shuffling of cards. They begin again. I don't get tired of watching. I feel rather interested. I wonder which pair of hands will win. How senseless it all looks ; those tips of fingers, and nimble knuckles, and shirt cuffs, playing cards ! I half laugh to myself as I watch. There is something comic in it, and yet something witch-like. Something positively dreary. I think now, I don't know why, of Faust and Mephistopheles. I've a great mind to go in, and shut my own window, and go to bed, in spite of the soft moonlight and fine Italian atmosphere.

Hullo ! stay—one pair of hands is certainly losing. Losing not only the game, but temper. How angrily that last card was thrown down ! There is a pause ; a dispute ; a doubt as to the play of those opponent hands with the long cuffs. Cards are shown. The signet pair of hands seem satisfied. Play is resumed. Play goes on for some time. Another pause. The signet hand is clenched, and strikes the table passionately three or four times ! The long cuffs remain immovable : then slowly let all the cards held by them fall on the table : quite flat, and spread out, like leaves. The signet hand pushes them impatiently towards the player. I wish I could see the players ; but I can't, move which way I will. They play again. Again the signet hand is angry. The player must be standing up, for the hand shows much more of the arm and of the cuff ; and the cards are all thrown down. The other hands gather them up. Money is laid down. A good deal of money. No notes, all gold and silver. The coin glitters brightly under the lamp, and makes

an artistic contrast of colour with the gleam on the green baize. The signet pair of hands have gone away. I wonder if they could afford the loss? The other hands remain; they stretch across the table and draw all the money into a heap. They divide the gold from the silver and make little rouleaus of each. Presently they also alter their position. I can just see the outline of the side of a man as he stands up at the small window. I cannot discern anything more. He is putting the money in his pocket. He is gone. Nothing is at the window now, but the lamp shining down on the green-baize field of battle. It shines on—and on—and on—in loneliness. After a while the first hands (not either of the pair I have been lately watching) come in and clutch that lamp and take it away. The little window is dark. How senseless and curious it seems as I think it over! Hands without heads or souls. I look up at the soft clear sky, and wonder at the great and little struggles of earth.

I turn from the high balcony terrace above the sapphire sea, and take my own little lamp and go to my room. I am haunted, as I fall asleep, by the restless hands, and the gleam on the green baize.

I am wakened by a sudden sound. What was it? It sounded like the report of a pistol. It certainly *was* a pistol shot. And now there is a general stir in the hotel, everyone coming out of bedroom and garret and asking everyone else 'what is the matter?' I also stand at my door, gazing out over the dark staircase, listening. I ask 'what is the matter' of some one passing swiftly down. The person I accost does'nt know. I ask another, who is slowly ascending the stair. He has enquired. It is a young Englishman who has shot himself. Who? That he does not know. Nor did I ever know. Even after his name was given, as found on letters and visiting cards, it told nothing. No known name.

Never since have I been able to read a page of Tasso—still less to watch in any country house or town house the progress of a game at whist; beginning in such profound and calculating silence and ending in garrulous explanations and disputes as to cards laid down, and honours held, and opportunities missed—without recalling to memory that vivid picture of the lamp on the green-baize table, the glittering coin, and the strange senseless strife between the two pair of Gambling Hands at Sorrento!

CAROLINE NORTON.

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